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**Master and Commander**

....p.10

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**Reading the Word with
senses renewed ... p.6**

“The responsibility to protect:” preventing genocide

New York, NY (WCC) – Two advocates for peace and human rights outlined principles for international intervention – including the possibility of military action – where violence or genocide threaten basic human rights at a November 13 public forum entitled “The responsibility to protect.” The forum was part of a World Council of Churches (WCC) International Affairs and Advocacy Week in New York.

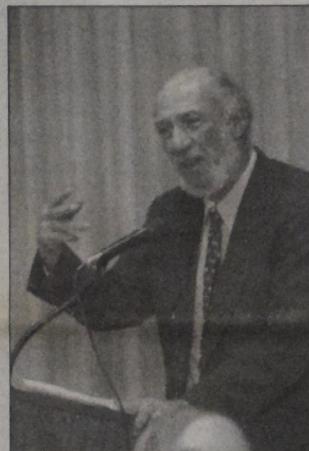
For Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations minister councillor Glyn Berry, preventing or ending violence and atrocities has been the theme of a “millennia-long conversation.” The subject remains particularly relevant, Berry said, in view of such modern-day examples as the killing fields in Cambodia and the genocidal slaughter of innocents in

Kosovo and Rwanda.

“The goal of international efforts is to prevent such incidences of violence before they occur,” he said, explaining that the underlying principle is to move nations and international bodies towards recognition of internationally recognized norms and laws so that neither prevention nor intervention is ultimately necessary.

The proper role of government

Although conversations are under way in international bodies and among nations, it is important to remember that they should remain centered within the context of the well-being of individual human beings, Berry reminded the forum participants. “Inherent in this notion is that it is the proper



Richard Falk

role and responsibility of government to protect all its citizens.”

For Berry, “there is such a jealous protection of the sovereignty of the nation state” in the modern

world that the concept of international jurisdiction in areas of human rights and the prevention of atrocities “is extremely sensitive.”

The international community represented by the United Nations “is not ready for a serious debate on the obligations of sovereignty.” Thus a “broader definition of sovereignty” that does not focus narrowly on military and political control of a specified territory, but rather “on the obligations of nation states to protect the human rights of their citizens” is needed.

Acknowledging that the attempt to develop an international consensus on this subject will “require a long-term effort to change norms,” he insisted that the conversation must be broadened beyond the UN to include civil society, NGOs, political parties

and other interest groups, and communities of faith.

‘Human security’

Noting that “at present, there is no consensus among those responsible for international law or policy making” about when to consider international action, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser urged participants to employ the WCC’s concept of “protection” over “intervention.” This shift in terminology “broadens the perspective by adopting the wider principle of ‘human security’ over against the narrow understanding of ‘national security,’ ” he suggested.

Raiser highlighted an inherent tension in the UN Charter between “the prohibition of intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign

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Drinking coffee, doing good

Sonya Vanderveen-Feddeema

Leny Holierhoek's eyes shine and her voice becomes impassioned when discussing fair trade and its benefits for the world's poor people. When asked to explain what fair trade is, Holierhoek, a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in St. Catharines, Ont., says, “It is based on the idea that those who produce products like coffee, tea, and cocoa are entitled to an income that can sustain their livelihood and families.”

According to Holierhoek, who holds a degree in Political Science from Brock University, European and North American fair trade cooperatives pay a fair price for coffee, tea, and cocoa imported

from small-scale farmer cooperatives in developing countries, refusing to accept world market prices, which are established according to supply and demand. In order to carry the fair trade logo on their products, the European and North American cooperatives must abide by international fair trade rules. The price they pay must cover all the costs of growing the products, plus provide a life-sustaining wage for farmers. Fair traders pay up front so that the growers don't become dependent on local moneylenders, called coyotes, who charge exorbitant interest rates. Because the fair traders sign multi-year contracts, grower cooperatives gain stability.

In *The No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade* author David Ransom chronicles the development of the fair trade movement over the past 30 years. That movement, he says, “has been working on the practicalities of trade done very differently” from what is considered to be the norm, and asks questions such as, “Can it be made to work for, rather than against, impoverished commodity producers in the South? Can the process of production be democratized, ownership shared, organized labor encouraged, child labor made unnecessary, environmental sustainability and human rights promoted? Can consumers be induced to think – and pay –

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Leny Holierhoek

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Responsibility

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states, and the affirmation of the universal validity of human rights and recognition that the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is essential for international peace."

Asserting that Christians "cannot escape making decisions involving moral and ethical uncertainties," Raiser noted that the ecumenical movement itself contains believers who differ about whether the teachings of Jesus allow the use of armed force. He noted that some uses of force are commonly accepted throughout the international community – such as the creation of police forces to defend individual rights and security, or the use of force in cases of individual self-defence.

Yet, Raiser reminded his audience, such accepted uses of force are held with certain limits: nearly all nations distinguish

between the roles of police and military, and most nations submit policing functions to judicial examination.

Who decides?

Raiser posed some crucial questions on the use of force on the international level. "Who makes the assessment that human security in a given state is endangered to such an extent that protection becomes a concern for the international community, and on the basis of what criteria?" he asked. "Who has the legitimate authority to take this decision on behalf of the international community?"

A decision to intervene "cannot be based solely on moral arguments, or on grounds of political expediency; it should pass through the trustees of the rule of law," Raiser insisted.

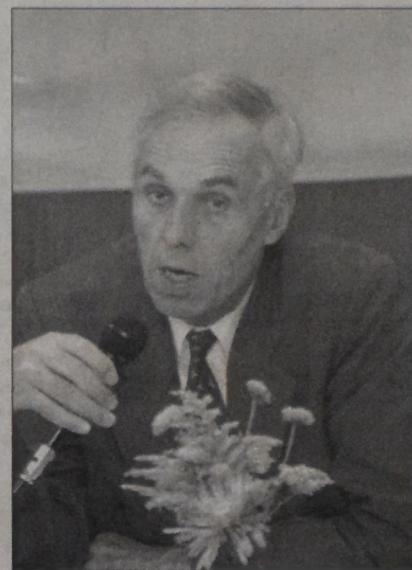
Since the UN Security Council currently acts "both as trustee of

international law and as the enforcing authority," the current configuration is "politically and ethically unsatisfactory, and opens the door to selective and arbitrary decisions," he suggested.

Principles for protection

There is an emerging consensus around the globe to recognize such international tribunals as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. But until that consensus is universally accepted, some general principles are needed to protect endangered populations, Raiser said.

"In a situation of a dramatic



Konrad Raiser

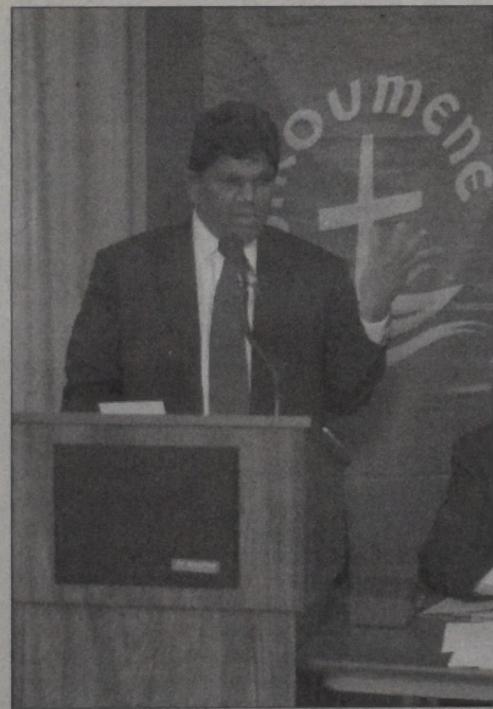
breakdown of public order and the inability or unwillingness of the existing government to protect citizens, the basic objective of any

international intervention must remain to reestablish a functioning framework of government which can assume the responsibility to protect – however imperfectly," he said.

However, a military intervention "causing disproportionate numbers of civilian casualties and vast damage to civilian infrastructure in violation of the Geneva Convention cannot be considered 'humanitarian,'" Raiser argued. Any military protection must be "proportional" to the scale and scope of the conflict, and "even military protection for humanitarian action can compromise its objectives," he warned.

"Human rights cannot be enforced by military means. In contrast to military logic, it is precisely the purpose of international humanitarian law to protect the rights and dignity of people in situations of war," Raiser asserted.

Human rights: "People of faith are not loud enough"



Bertrand Ramcharan

Churches (WCC) International Affairs and Advocacy Week in New York on November 10.

"The great accomplishment of Vienna was to reaffirm the universality of human rights and to reiterate that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings," said Dr. Bertrand Ramcharan, UN acting high commissioner on Human Rights in Geneva, in

prepared remarks for the forum.

Yet Ramcharan contended that despite an emerging consensus around the globe about the formal understanding of human rights and improved mechanisms for monitoring human rights abuses, "on the ground it is a very dif-

ferent matter."

"The actual enjoyment of basic human rights remains illusory for large masses of the world's people. Poverty, the lack of access to the means for a dignified life, governmental violence, and prejudice and discrimination are some of the root causes for this state of affairs."

Litany of horrors

Ramcharan cited a litany of horrors to illustrate his argument. "Arbitrary and summary executions, torture, enforced and involuntary disappearances, arbitrary detention, violence against women, religious intolerance, denial of freedom of expression – all abound in today's world," he said. "No one can deny that what we have witnessed over the past decade, and what we continue to witness, are violations of human rights that are shocking to the human conscience."

Since the meeting in Vienna, there have been some positive developments Ramcharan suggested. For example, the work of UNICEF and the International Convention of the Rights of the Child have "certainly helped to raise awareness of child rights issues in the world, and one could

say that this has been one of the positive developments over the past decade," he said. "Nevertheless, the protection of the rights of children leaves so much to be desired in numerous parts of the world," he added.

Ramcharan also decried what he described as "the institutional and domestic violence against women" around the world. "In today's world, women face numerous obstacles to the enjoyment of basic human rights, and continue to be the victims of pervasive discrimination and injustice," he said. "We cannot solve the problem of war and peace without empowering women, because empowering women will empower entire families."

Ramcharan urged participants to explore "ways of taking the human rights cause forward," beginning with the transformation of individual minds and hearts, and then implementing "national mechanisms for protection of human rights in each country."

He insisted that the WCC and individual member churches "must continue to do the job of promoting and preaching human rights around the world." And he suggested that education "is the key" to moving the cause

forward. "It is the young people of the world who will vindicate the protection of human rights. That is why it is so important to increase our efforts to provide information and education about human rights to the young people of the world," he concluded.

A movement toward inclusion

During the past couple of decades, the world has seen a movement from "exclusion towards the inclusion of marginalized peoples," said Theo van Boven, UN special rapporteur on torture, in his remarks to the forum. "This tendency to give voice to human rights victims, the development of international law, and the growth of international tribunals have all led to a greater understanding of human rights," van Boven added.

Yet, he pointed out, other movements have served to weaken human rights. "Globalization has diminished the role of the state, resulting in the



Theo van Boven

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Fair Trade



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more than they currently appear to believe is necessary? Is it possible to survive, even to prosper, both 'in and against' the conventional marketplace? Is there any 'bottom line' other than price and profit?" (Toronto: New Internationalist and Between the Lines, 2001, p. 20).

Holierhoek would answer all Ransom's questions in the affirmative. Her interest in fair-trade issues grew out of her involvement during the 1960s with Development and Peace (D&P), an organization established by the Catholic Bishops of Canada. D&P's mandate is to work with people and organizations in developing countries. Holierhoek initiated a D&P committee in her parish and, in collaboration with her pastor, set up study nights to learn about the conditions people in developing countries live under. Especially active during the church seasons of Advent and Lent, the local committee, under the umbrella of the national D&P, contacted Canadian and Third World government officials to lobby for the oppressed and raised funds for D&P projects worldwide.

"Over the years, through local and provincial workshops and through speakers who gave testimony about conditions in their countries," Holierhoek explains, "I learned a great deal. I learned especially that there was something wrong with our trading patterns. We pay very little for Third World products, while they pay lots for ours. Obviously, that's a trading situation that keeps their people living in poverty."

At a D&P Conference in Toronto in the early 1980s Holierhoek came across fair trade coffee sold by Bridgehead, a fair trade co-operative, and purchased some. Later, when a local high school teacher convinced the manager of an IGA store to sell

the coffee, Holierhoek bought it there. Eventually, the store changed ownership and the sale of fair-trade coffee was discontinued.

Meanwhile, Holierhoek helped to establish a local Latin America Support Group (LASG) to focus on Central and South American justice issues. The LASG worked alongside Tools for Peace, a national group helping the people of Nicaragua.

Holierhoek recalls that, because the US had imposed an embargo on Nicaragua, Nicaraguan coffee growers could not sell their products in the US. However, in Canada consumers were able to buy Nicaraguan coffee through Bridgehead. At Holierhoek's request, LASG made the promotion of fair trade a part of their mandate. She personally took on the project under the LASG banner, began to sell the products throughout the Niagara region, and continues to do so.

Holierhoek's sales venues include her church's monthly coffee social hour and yearly bazaar, her diocesan D&P workshops, International Women's Day events, World Day of Prayer services, and the United Church Women's annual conference. Also, with the help of faithful volunteers in their individual churches, she promotes the products in the Niagara Christian community.

Though Holierhoek is well received in the various locales where she promotes fair trade products, she maintains that "friendliness doesn't always result in sales." She explains: "The problem we have in North America is that we are used to buying very cheap coffee and we aren't aware that those who grow the beans often don't earn enough to feed, clothe, and educate their children."

Also, she points out, North Americans don't always realize

Some fair-trade facts and suggestions

Fair-trade coffee has dramatically helped Central American coffee growers, who are suffering from a one-two punch of low prices and drought. At the end of the 1980s, coffee growers received \$1.20 per pound, according to the International Coffee Organization, but now coffee sells for 42 cents per pound – one cent less than the cost of production. USAID estimates that coffee producers in Central America last year lost about \$1.5 billion, with 600,000 coffee workers losing their jobs. However, under the World Relief program and similar efforts, coffee growers receive \$1.26 per pound.

According to the Fair Trade Federation's 2003 report on fair-trade trends, Java for Jesus Coffee dominates the fair-trade market.

World Relief, an arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, along with Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, the CRWRC and the US Agency for International Development, educates farmers in such matters as soil conservation techniques, as well as providing low-cost seeds and equipment.

World Relief also works with churches and individual buyers in North America to sell the coffee. Churches then buy the coffee wholesale and often will sell it and use the profits to support missions.

Pura Vida, a Seattle-based company, has used the fair-trade principle since its founding in 1998. It buys coffee mainly from farmers in Costa Rica for sale to North American churches and individuals. Pura Vida Partners, the non-profit organization into which profits are invested, operates several children's ministries in Costa Rica.

In Tanzania, a coffee producing country, CRWRC is helping farmers grow pyrethrum, a crop used to prevent malaria, among other things. Pyrethrum farming brings producers a fairer return for their labor. This project promotes economic justice for those farmers on a local scale. However, Tanzania still depends heavily on coffee exports to earn foreign currency needed to buy imports and pay for its international debt.

You can buy fair-trade coffee, tea and nuts to ensure that the farmers who grow these commodities get a decent price. Buy it for your home, and get your churches to switch to fair-trade coffee for fellowship times. For information on a fair-trade coffee retailer in your

area, visit www.transfair.ca (Canada) or www.equalexchange.com (USA). Support the growing export market of fairly traded handicrafts and other products from African artisans. Especially around Christmas time, there are many sales and shops where you can be sure that your purchase covers a fair price to the artisans. Some of the micro-entrepreneurs that CRWRC supports through savings and credit projects are artisans who sell to export markets.

Ten Thousand Villages, a Mennonite mission, operates 70 stores that market fair-trade products from developing countries. Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit, self-supporting alternative trading organization. The latter are non-governmental organizations designed to benefit artisans, not to maximize profits. They market products that have been purchased at a fair price from handicraft and agricultural organizations in low-income countries. Alternative trading organizations put fair trade into practice and campaign for more equitable terms of trade for artisans from these countries.

This is how International Federation for Alternative Trade defines fair trade:

- Fair trade is better than aid – it builds a sustainable future on artisans own abilities.
- Improving the artisan's quality of life is the main objective.
- Artisans receive a fair price for their goods and advances on orders.
- Artisans receive help to provide quality products.
- Sources, production and workplaces do not exploit people or the environment.
- Consumers are informed about the people who make the products they purchase, increasing their loyalty and understanding that their purchasing power makes a difference.

Ten Thousand Villages is also a member of Fair Trade Federation, a coalition of more than two hundred craft producers, wholesalers and retailers which seeks to develop a workable agenda for handicrafts and agricultural products within the context of fair trade.

The above information was garnered from the Christianity Today and the Mennonite Central Committee websites.

because, not only do I enjoy my cup of coffee more, but I drink it and do my work with a sense that I am contributing to the wellbeing of so many in the coffee and tea growing nations."

She adds, "If we all traded



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Editorial

Command: between obedience and obsession

Harry der Nederlanden

Films are a great source of entertainment and diversion. They are also an art form, often shallow, but sometimes profound. Even when they aren't particularly profound but closer to the Hollywood genres, they can tell us a lot about our time. The way images, plots, stereotypes and characters are woven together demands a kind of thinking that can be every bit as complex and interesting as theological or philosophical reflection.

In this issue we have three movie reviews. The only one of the three that I've seen is *Master and Commander*, which Marian van Til reviews, armed with deep acquaintance with the novels on which the film is based. I want to put the film to another use here, namely, as a mirror to reflect on our own time. I'm not suggesting this is the only way to engage a secular film, but I hope it's suggestive.

The film is, of course, set in a time very different from ours, shortly after the beginning of the 19th century; it is like ours, however, in that it is a time of war and of a great sea-change in European culture. The story plays itself out far, far from the centers of power, however – off the coast of South America. In the days of sailing ships, that was like being on another planet. To reach this part of the globe took weeks, months, and for the duration you were out of touch with home.

Think of the movie in terms of a double distancing, then. The world of the movie is far removed from us, the audience, and the world of the ship is similarly far removed from its home country. Strangely, this double distancing seems to bring the ship closer to us, as if it were bobbing out there in the vastness of the Atlantic halfway between then and now, in a kind of elemental time, a time that brings to the fore those basic things we have in common.

In our time, however, to suggest that there is an endur-

ing humanity that we all share has been cast in doubt. It lends itself to imperialism. Being the self-centred creatures that we are, inevitably the model of humanity that we hold up as the universal is nothing more than our own class and culture writ large.

The face of authority

It's a telling critique – one that Christians who accept the doctrine of human depravity ought to understand. Not a few reviewers of *Master and Commander* expressed irritation at the model of manhood embodied in Captain Jack Aubrey, the central character of the movie. The combination of discipline, authority, integrity and strength that a good officer must exemplify is not easily embraced by contemporary audiences. Despite the effort made in the film to soften the face of authority, this image of a man who more or less successfully seeks to represent to and for his men a code of rectitude and honor – an ideal – draws snickers from many contemporary critics, snickers that are not wholly due to an artistic failure but a difference in worldview.

In an age where democracy and therapy are the highest values, authority seems anachronistic.

It is true, of course, that what we are shown in *Master and Commander* in the captain and in the friendship between captain and doctor is hardly typical of navy ships at the time. A social critic might focus on the inhumane discipline, the absolute authority of the captain, the class differences between officers and crew, the practice of forcing men to serve if there was a shortage of sailors, and so on to portray naval ships as pestiferous hell-holes. The ship *Surprise* and its captain are exceptional and so is the friendship, but we moderns have difficulty with representations of the ideal because we feel that it not only fails to capture the real but that it is a cover-up of the real.

Those who complain that Captain Aubrey is a paragon of virtue and rectitude in this movie, however, have missed something. As Captain Aubrey pursues his goal, his prize the French warship *Acheron*, across "the far side of the world," he soon exceeds the simple call of duty, as he himself confesses. We see in him elements of more infamous captains – of Captain Ahab and Captain Bligh perhaps. The contest between his ship and the larger, more powerful French ship takes on the character of a personal challenge, an obsession perhaps, in which Captain Aubrey is willing to risk all, his ship and crew, to best the wily Frenchman.

It is only after the ship loses one of its masts in rough seas, dragging overboard a likeable young officer, and the captain's friend and ship's doctor, Stephen Maturin, is wounded that the captain turns aside from his monomaniacal mission for another good. While at one time it is necessary to sacrifice one of his men to save the ship, this time he refuses to make such a sacrifice.

The film does in this way offer us a glimpse into the inner tension of a worldview with a command ethic and a principle of authority. When a person (or a people) believes he is acting in accordance with a higher law and in pursuit of a divinely ordained duty, personal and transpersonal purposes are easily identified. Leaders turn into tyrants and humble folk are sacrificed to the greater goal, the higher good.

Living a command ethic

Christians believe in authority, callings, norms; wherever they serve they must seek to embody the will of a higher commander. The claims of religion are absolute; consequently, we are inclined to make our mission absolute, to turn it into an ideology. Like the captain, we have

constantly to be on guard against this temptation. Part of living a command ethic is to learn at what point to break off and defer the outcome to God.

It is not in our hands to bring our lives to completion and victory. Faith is not only accepting a charge and making our lives "purpose-driven"; it is also deferral – a refusal to take into our hands the total responsibility for shaping our personal and corporate destinies. A lesson for powerful statesmen. And also for activist Kuyperians.

At the root of the cultural mandate is the Sabbath. And this is what the turn away from the military mission to a time of healing in the Galapagos Islands represents.

The Galapagos represent something else as well. Doctor Maturin, the captain's friend, is a naturalist, and the islands are a feast of new species waiting to be discovered and to bring fame to their discoverer. They represent a competing passion and mission – *libido sciendi* as opposed to *libido dominandi*, the desire to know as opposed to the desire to rule, if I have the Latin right. In Greek tragedy such conflicting goods tend to lead to a fatal ending. Not here. There's a time to destroy and there's a time for healing. And there's a time when the captain and the doctor retire to their quarters to play lovely duets for violin and cello that turn the *Surprise* into a floating image of harmony, a hint of a higher order.

The Galapagos also remind us that it was after his visit here that Darwin developed the grand narrative of *The Origin of the Species*, which gathered the destiny of men and animals, nature and culture into a single, linear story of evolutionary progress. The sabbatical on the Galapagos is, as it were, a visit to the beginning of evolutionary time – the grandest of the grand narratives conceived in the 19th century. Put this alongside the grand narrative of world empire and conquest that Captain Aubrey and his ship represent in this far corner of the globe, and we see why this film has epic dimensions.

Yet, several critics have complained about the discontinuous, episodic, almost meandering nature of the plot. If the plot line of the victory over the French ship is so crucial, asks one critic, "Why does Weir [the director] keep shunting it aside, allowing lesser stories to take precedence?" It is precisely this quality that enriches the film for me. This is not a haphazard melting together of disconnected plots. It is, on the contrary, another way to comment on the dangers of allowing oneself to be swallowed up into a single, dominating story or purpose that it is our destiny to realize.

There is a lot of mirroring imagery in this film. The two ships stalk one another, first one playing the role of predator [a term drawn from nature] and then the other. At one point, the doctor says to the captain, "He [the French captain] thinks just like you." The sailors of the *Surprise* are spooked by the uncanny ability of the French ship to sneak up on them and refer to it as a ghost ship. One imagines, in view of the stubborn tenacity of Aubrey, that the crew of the *Acheron* is saying similar things. In the final encounter, Aubrey adopts a strategy that we subsequently learn was adopted by the French captain as well.

So there's a gesture toward a certain moral equivalency between the two vessels in the film. There's no demonization of the enemy, no confrontation between good and evil, just two captains and two ships caught up in a common story. The greatest threat comes not from without but from within. So the meaning of the mission does not derive from the story that pits them against each other but from how they behave within that story. So the film prompts us to ask whether there is another story, one outside the grand narratives offered, that makes sense of this story about duty, authority, friendship and sacrifice.

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privatization of security and prisons, and increasing the role of 'non-state' entities, such as transnational corporations, "he said.

"We are seeing a growing violation of human rights by businesses, and some paramilitary and religious groups, and in this new environment, we must strive to make transnational corporations and companies comply with human rights conventions," he added.

According to van Boven, with globalization and diminished state power, the future of human rights advocacy will increasingly depend on "non-governmental human rights defenders, religious communities and NGOs." In addition, he contended, human rights strategies are only effective when they are conducted "in tandem with strategies of peace".

Continue in solidarity

"We must continue to be in solidarity with those who struggle for human rights and against structures in society that oppose human rights," said Mia Adjali, executive secretary for Global Concerns in the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. According to Adjali, that solidarity must include "the power of knowing that people can make a difference in their lives because they begin to understand that they have a right to a better life."

Adjali offered three reminders when advocating for human rights. First, she said, it is important to remember that human rights apply to both individuals and groups. Second, strategies for defining human rights require recourse to political action. "The subject of human rights is often controversial, and usually has a political dimension," she said. Third, "universal human rights apply to our own situation and to the situations encountered by others," she contended. The final reminder, Adjali said, is "sometimes difficult for people in the United States to remember." As a US citizen, she suggested that "We Americans are expert at pointing out human rights violations around the world, but not so eager to look at such violations within our own country."

Women's rights are human rights

"One of the most important developments during the meeting in Vienna was the recognition that women's rights are human rights," said Parvina Nadjibulla, Resources Center specialist in the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. "That recognition was not only for the sake of gender equality, but also an understanding that the elimination of poverty, hunger, disease, and conflict will only happen if women's rights are upheld," she said.

Slaying Canada's deficit dragon

Will Paul Martin, the *fiscal* deficit slayer, now tackle Canada's social deficit? Will the PM-elect now declare his core-values, budget priorities and policy proposals that promote and protect the public good, including the poor and powerless?

The House of Commons Standing Committee's pre-budget consultations enabled Canadians to participate in "a national dialogue to share priorities, values and specific proposals that will contribute to our nation's success." Many made grateful use of this democratic opportunity to articulate which measures should be taken "to ensure progress in investing in, and caring for, all members of Canadian society."

Many participants advocate that the next budget contain more effective measures to help build a greater caring and sharing society. They include: increasing federal in-

vestments in early childhood education and care; improving child benefits for low-income families; stopping the provincial claw-back of benefits from people receiving social assistance; and ensuring the availability of affordable housing.

We urged the Commons Committee to give priority attention to the worsening plight of needy families and hungry children by making specific budget allocations as well as good use of Ottawa's surplus (\$7 billion for 2002-03).

We reminded the MPs of the critical observations by Canada's Auditor-General, Sheila Fraser, made public with the Government's financial statements for 2002: "I have become concerned in recent years with certain misinformation on what happens to the surplus for the year. The surplus for the year does *not* auto-

matically pay down the debt. There is neither any law nor accounting rule that requires this."

The challenge confronting Mr. Martin is to take the lead and spell out his priorities. Canadians are entitled to know his social-justice commitments. We must hear how he will use the annual surplus and upcoming budgets to advance the human well-being of all, especially vulnerable families and voiceless children.

Will Mr. Martin use his credibility and popularity to demonstrate his regard for human dignity and a dynamic democracy? Will he use his political prestige for the common good of all, without discrimination?

Millions of Canadians are watching with real expectations. Will the PM-elect act courageously to slay Canada's *social* deficit dragon next?

**Gerald Vandendaele, C.M.
Scarborough, ON**



Parvina Nadjibulla

Nadjibulla also addressed "the complex relationship of human rights and terrorism," contending that "terrorism is violation of human rights, and the violation of human rights is often the origin of terror." And she suggested that improvements for the marginalized might occur "at the expense of the powerful."

In a historical review of human rights around the globe, Nadjibulla identified four steps for activists and advocates to follow. First, advocates must agree on a declaration of universal standards. Second, nations must develop a process to achieve the standards locally. Third, international monitoring bodies and treaty committees must oversee the national standards. And fourth, "The world community must develop mechanisms of enforcement, and so far, those mechanisms are not strong enough."

Nadjibulla and her colleagues agreed that the WCC and the UN should work together in grassroots efforts with academia, other faith communities, businesses, and local governments to press for human rights.

"People of faith are often not loud enough," Nadjibulla concluded.

Positive about Conservative merger

My longtime friend Nick Loenen argues that the proposed merger of PC and CA will not fix Canada's more fundamental problem, which is "the archaic voting system." I share his objection to the unfairness of the system, popularly called "first-past-the-post." And I, too, wish that the Canadian Alliance (and the new Conservative Party) would give stronger leadership in working toward a more proportional system. His disappointment at these two parties seeking to merely soften this problem by this merger, rather than seeking to solve it, is clear.

Yet I am much more positive than he is about the benefits this union would bring to politics in our nation. And it would have helped if Nick had stayed away from barbed words like "desperate," "marriage of convenience," "back to the Mulroney area." I believe the motivation of those who push this union is much more positive. For one thing, it will help overcome some of the unfair bias on which many insist about a Western party, an ultra-conservative party, which we who actually are active in the CA never recognize. And the CA itself has broadened its priorities, away from fiscal responsibility, and justice issues to include more attention for social concerns about our nation.

In short, the time for this union has come. I am convinced that true "conservatives" have begun to recognize that what we have in common is a much greater power for good than what divides us. I am very hopeful about this merger.

**William Vander Beek
Langley, BC**

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Prayer/Bible Reading

Praying for a new world while in contested territory

Until recently, religious leaders were regularly asked to open convocation ceremonies at the University of Dalhousie, Halifax. Then one Mormon representative used the name of Jesus in an invocation. In another convocation a Roman Catholic priest read a psalm from the Hebrew scriptures as his prayer. Shortly afterwards, the President of the university (apparently of Jewish background) requested invocational prayers be discontinued.

"We were officially told that the ceremonies needed to be streamlined for greater efficiency," said CRC chaplain Steve Martin, "and the prayers were one of the parts cut out." When asked about the chaplaincy's response, Martin replied, "We were told the case is closed. No discussion is possible. It's too bad. Acknowledging God's presence at convocation is a way of saying that the university is not the end-all be-all in terms of knowledge and truth. There is a reference point beyond it, greater than it."

Nobody is happy

Public prayer is a contentious issue on a secular campus. On one hand you have professors and administrators who have been socialized by a post-Christian academy. They are often oblivious, if not hostile to faith in something that transcends a horizontal vision and the pursuit of efficient living. Some, with more social concern, consider any expression of religious particularity to be hurtful to those who listen. So it is at Brock that we were recently asked not to mention "God" in our prayers before student residence dinners, and now we have been deleted from any dinner at all in that department.

On the other hand there are those who consider prayer to be an opportunity for evangelism. "Are you going to pray that they all get saved?" winks one student at a recent event for which I was giving a word of thanks. Prayer, in some people's understanding, is like a sermon intended to challenge those who may hear it. It is a declaration of faith before an unsuspecting crowd.

Both these perspectives deny the vital necessity for a public university to be an environment where principled pluralism should be modeled. The first militates against the presence of any faith tradition and the second insists on the imposition of one over against others. If we are, however, to create a society where we educate people to respect the major faiths that call this nation home, we must find a third way.

A third way in public prayer

This third way should give all recognized faiths space in the public realm provided they respect all convictions present. Their prayers would acknowledge not only that we are all accountable to a higher power, but that the public square is a contested realm, and it is never religiously vacant. To have no prayer is as much a religious statement as having prayer. If anyone will ban legitimate religious groups from a turn at front, remember that your faith may just be the next one banned, by virtue of your own ethic.

A time of silence is very democratic and it has a reverence that words cannot compete with. But it can be a cop-out, a way of avoiding each other. Silence requires no clergy and no particularity. You don't have to listen to your neighbor and be reminded of (or educated about) his faith. Still, this is the vital point: religion is not a private hobby for the spiritually inclined,

CAMPUS CULTURE

Peter Schuurman

but a public affair, whether repressed or celebrated.

I should mention that prayer at banquets and convocations is different from discussions on religious topics in the classroom or in campus dialogues. Academic rigor and honesty requires that we invite, inform, persuade, and even urgently plead with people to let themselves be found by God in Christ. University is a hallway where we passionately and respectfully share and debate about what is true and good according to our own convictions, whether we are convinced materialists, gay activists, or Sikhs. You may even democratically legislate that all prayers should be Christian if you are influential enough to convince the whole nation. The invitation to pray at a formal gathering, however, is a request to lead a group of people in thanks according to one's own spiritual practise. Not to debate or preach.

For me, that means that I stand at a podium and stare out at a vast sea of faces, some already looking puzzled that a creature such as a chaplain could exist and that they are about to be led in prayer at their supposedly secular school. I then say, "I have been asked to offer a prayer of invocation to begin our celebration and reflection today. Our university is a diverse, open community with people of many faiths and convictions, and what I offer today as a Christian chaplain I give with due respect to those who may do this differently."

Respectful prayer in a multi-faith setting

Then I offer a prayer that gives words for the moment. At a convocation, I would say something along the lines of the following:

Gracious God, Source of all wisdom:

These students stand at the finish line of one of their learning journeys. Thank you for the friends, family, and mentors who have cheered them on through the tests and papers of many years so that they might sit here today in grateful anticipation.

Bless them as they continue to study life. Give them courage in the face of frustration, hope to carry them through times of despair, and a compassionate, creative spirit that brings life to those around them.

May they be wise enough to be uncomfortable with superficial solutions, but foolish enough to believe they can always make a difference in this world.

May Brock University, and all who work and study here, continue to unfold the richness and beauty of your creation. Amen.

In conclusion, let me repeat that this is a controversial issue on secular terrain. I consider it a necessary courtesy that the administration allows us this opportunity: without acknowledging God we are assuming his role ourselves. But I still feel awkward. My prayers are like my art, an expression of my soul, and I feel vulnerable.

In fact, I think many people in the crowd feel both uncomfortable and uncertain: this prayer does not fit with so much of what happens in the university. Ultimately, this is good and right: prayer rubs us up against a holy other world. This other world's peacefulness and beauty make us uneasy. Yet it is that world to which we are all called, with one foot already along the way.

Peter Schuurman is chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario

Reading to help us read the Word with senses renewed

How to Read the Bible to Hear God Speak, Calvin G. Seerveld
When the Kings Come Marching In, Richard J. Mouw

Reviewed by Harry der Nederlanden

Go into any large bookstore nowadays and in the religion section you'll find all sorts of books dealing with the Bible. They offer new insights into the familiar stories we've been hearing all our lives. The latest to hit the popular press is a "gospel" by Mary Magdalene, long ago discredited, now resuscitated by those eager to sensationalize a warped interpretation of Christian history and belief. Some of this pseudo-scholarship has even made it into the TV news. What can be more sensational? Jesus had a lover – Mary Magdalene. Or perhaps it was Luke. And news of his death was exaggerated, for he escaped to start a radical cult in the desert.

The reliable (and predictable) conservative scholars seldom draw press attention. It is the heretical Bishop Spong and the scholars who sift all that is "inauthentic" from the New Testament, like John Dominic Crossan, who seems to get all the attention. Elaine Pagels' attempts to rescue from oblivion and bring into the mainstream a gnostic version of Christianity has also attracted a lot of attention.

Scholars are doing weird and wonderful things with the biblical texts, and this loosey-goosey attitude toward Scripture is infiltrating the churches. People are beginning to become skeptical about the ability of the text to ground us in the truth. "You can read anything into them that you want. It's all a matter of interpretation," they say. And ever larger numbers become indifferent to debates about truth and doctrine. Others react by becoming militant, asserting clarity and fixity where it's uncalled for, and invoking slippery slope arguments on even minor differences: "If we don't draw the line here, we're headed for relativism."

On the other hand, among those on the right who loudly declare their belief in the inerrancy of Scripture there are those who extort fantastic scenarios about the end-times from the Bible or who extract from it esoteric forms of religiosity to set themselves apart.

If you're badly in need of a dose of sanity with regard to understanding the Bible, and you're not

looking for a long, technical treatise, good news. Calvin Seerveld's study of Numbers 22-24 has been reissued in an expanded edition: *How to Read the Bible to Hear God Speak*. I read it with excitement and appreciation not long after it was first published and just read it again. It struck me just as refreshing and clarifying now as it did then. Just like hockey players, we develop bad habits, and every now and again we have to be reminded of fundamentals. This booklet of about 100 pages still does the job admirably.



How to Read... is published by the Dordt College Press and Toronto Tupence Press.

Seerveld does not load the reader with a long list of hermeneutical principles or schemas to follow. He works mainly by way of a single concrete example – the story of Balaam in Numbers. He does glance at three approaches that lead us astray: a fundamentalistic, a higher-critical and a dogmatic reading. Upon reading this part, I was struck once again how easily not just preachers but I myself slip at various times into each of these skewed approaches. The fundamentalistic approach is too eager to extract lessons, moral and religious, from the story, losing sight of the big story. The higher-critical approach makes the text so distant and interpreting it so complex that the Bible is taken out of our hands and turned into an archaeological site entrusted only to experts. The dogmatic reading distances us from Scripture by turning our reading into a quest for proof texts for doctrines. We do need to use our brains to interpret Scripture, but it must first speak to our hearts, to where we live.

In the new afterword, Seerveld

Bible Reading/Reflection



Balaam meets the angle in Numbers

TAKEN FROM BIBLE FOR CHILDREN

takes a brief look at the liberationist and feminist approaches to Scripture. While conceding a certain validity to its sensitivity to divine judgment uttered on all injustice, he concludes that its flaw is "its localization of evil in the institutionalization of power. Then the powerless are taken at face value as anonymous saints, the poor cannot themselves be greedy, and outcasts will never have a vindictive heart."

Warning against an overly literalistic reading that reduces Scripture to an evangelistic tract, Seerveld cautions: "It is a mistake to read the Bible too fast, as if it were today's newspaper followed by other dispatches tomorrow, since the Bible as book is not an easy read. The Bible is *profoundly* simple, perspicuous but deserving and needing study, because the Bible is God-speaking literature and not a body of simple sentences."

complicate their reading of Scripture to be torn asunder. That's not all bad. But Seerveld's book will serve as a wonderful inoculation of biblical wholesomeness against tearing asunder what God has woven together wonderfully and delicately. I love the way he refuses to allow, for example, the literal and the literary dimensions of Scripture. To affirm the artfulness of the writers and editors is not to undermine the actuality of event and miracle.

While I'm handing out enthusiastic plugs, I want to mention another revised and updated and equally brief work: Richard Mouw's *When the Kings Come Marching In*. Like Seerveld's book it consists of lectures on a specific passage of Scripture, in this case Isaiah 60, the vision of the New Jerusalem. The focus is on the Bible's attitude towards culture.

The vision of the New Jerusa-

lem is an Old Testament portrayal of heaven. So Isaiah prophesies a time beyond time when the ships of Tarshish and the kings of the nations will be led into heaven. Our lives are directed toward a city which will have direct connections with life on this earth, including the economic and the political, for ships are for commerce and kings rule. But surely the gates of the Holy City will not be thrown open to the ships of unbelieving Tarshish and the rulers of pagan nations!

What light does Isaiah 60 shed on our view of heaven and on how we should relate to power structures and cultural goods of our society? Mouw speaks of a healing of the "wealth of nations" as part of God's plan of redemption. The biblical vision of salvation doesn't just expand beyond the descendants of Abraham here but beyond "souls" to structures and things. At the culmination of history not just the righteous and their works shall be gathered in, but also the products of unbelieving nations.

As Mouw explores the implications of this splendid prophetic chapter, he opens Scripture in a way that brings together what in our schizoid lives so often gets separated – an emphasis on personal

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

Keeping faith warm in a cold world

Yesterday I visited my mother. She's approaching her 80th birthday. In spite of aches and pains and various health issues, she's still able to live on her own in a senior's apartment. I did some laundry for her, took care of a few odds and ends, and then we went out for lunch.

The autumn sun shone timidly through the window as my mom finished her pizza and sipped contentedly on her ginger ale. Just for a moment I thought of how she must have looked as a child. How she still looks to God.

Usually when I ask if she'd like to go shopping, Mom says she doesn't know what to buy. But yesterday she wanted to look for a long-sleeved, red sweater.

I steadied her as we walked across the parking lot and into the store. Macular degeneration has left her with only peripheral vision, so I explained what precise shades of red we were looking at, the fabric, and designs of various sweaters. I watched as she tried on one after another and stood in front of the mirror, maneuvering herself to see how she looked.

And suddenly I was back in my childhood, watching her get ready for work – checking her hair, applying a little lipstick and smoothing the folds of her blouse before she left the house.

At the end of the day we went to Tim Horton's. I helped her out of the car and into the restaurant, and then seated her at a table while I went to order coffee and one of her favorite donuts.

The woman behind the counter, a complete stranger, smiled at me and asked, "Got your mom out for the day?" I nodded.

Back at the table I watched Mom's hand tremble slightly as she lifted the stone mug to her lips. "It's a pretty nice day – for this time of year," she said.

By the time we got back to her apartment she was tired and I had to leave for home. She walked me to the elevator and I gave her a hug and a kiss goodbye.

Today, as I write, a vicious west wind drives the snow past my office window. The maple trees stand like charcoal skeletons against a pewter sky. It's hard to picture their glorious summer foliage. A couple of brave sparrows huddle in the lee of the

bird feeder. The songbirds have all flown south. My puppy refuses to go out unless I pick him up and personally accompany him. This is his first snowfall and the drifts are already as high as his shoulder.

I stare out the window and wonder at the world about to go to sleep for the winter. I try to imagine that it will come back to life next spring. Everything looks dead right now. But it's all part of God's plan.

I look across at the neighbor's fields. It's been a difficult year for farmers. Some harvested soybeans late in the season, still at moisture levels so high it was hardly worthwhile. Many are watching the snow blow through their standing cornfields today, wondering if they'll ever get the crop into their granaries. Throughout the area, heavy beef cattle inhabit barnyards, as their owners wait anxiously for the US border to open up.

I pray for our neighbors. Somehow it will all work out. It's in God's hands.

And I think of my mom – in the winter of her life. I remember how she used to dance with my dad, so light on her feet. These days she uses a walker to get around. I recall her boundless energy when she was a young woman and her insatiable appetite for discussions on politics and current affairs. Now she needs a nap every afternoon, and marks the days off on her calendar to keep track of time.

I want to tell her that every winter is illuminated by an Advent. I long to remind her about how lifeless, brown bulbs bloom into magnificent spring flowers. But she doesn't want to hear about New Life, especially not from me.

So I pray for her. And I wonder how this will all work out. But I know it will. She's in God's hands. As am I. It's all part of his plan.



Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com

salvation and a celebration of the "social gospel." Here Mouw announces a theme that he has since developed in more detail in other books: "The work of the cross is a many-faceted transaction. There are, in a sense, several 'theologies of atonement' hinted at in the Scriptures." It is a liberating principle, giving us permission to follow wherever the light of the gospel disperses itself while remembering that it comes from one source – the One who is the Light of the World, the Lamp of the City of God.

When the Kings Come Marching In



When the Kings... is published by Eerdmans Publishing.

Church

France debates place of religion in society

Bernadette Sauvaget

Paris (ENI) – As a 1905 French law separating church and state approaches its centenary, and amidst current difficulties within French society in accepting and integrating Islam, a major debate has broken out in France on the place of religions in public life.

The debate was triggered by a fierce polemic – widely covered in the media – about whether female Muslim students may wear the Islamic veil to school.

French President Jacques Chirac appointed a commission in July to draw up proposals by the end of the year to deal with the situation. The commission is headed by Bernard Stasi, a centre-right former government minister known for his strong opposition to the extreme right National Front political party of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

"Seeing the issue as a problem of the veil is absurd," said Mohammed Arkoun, a specialist in Islam and a member of the Stasi commission. "The real problem is that the public expression of Islam irritates the French."

Composed of academics, political leaders and senior civil servants, the Stasi commission has been holding a number of meetings with key religious, political, union and association leaders.

The commission may find it difficult to draft a report, some observers believe, given that its members have very different and divergent views of secularism.

"It's not a question of making a pronouncement only on the Islamic veil," Stasi has said several times. He would like to draft a charter defining secularism in today's France. "Once this charter is written, then it will be necessary to draw the practical consequences," Stasi told ENI.

The idea of a charter has been welcomed by the French Protestant Federation. "We need to remember what secularism is all about," said the Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, president of the federation. "At one time, it was about struggling against the Catholic Church, then things calmed down. There is now a form of ignorant and arrogant secularity, while we need a modest secularity."

The veil controversy brought forth a proposal to ban all religious symbols from schools, including Catholic crosses, Jewish skullcaps and other religious symbols. The issue of banning religious symbols in school is also being debated elsewhere in Europe, notably in Italy and Germany.

French Roman Catholic bishops expressed dismay over efforts to ban the wearing of religious symbols, like crosses, in public and some private schools in France.

"The proposal to ban students from wearing all religious symbols in schools, when it does not trouble public order, seems to us a regression of freedom of expression," said Bishop Jean-Pierre Ricard, president of the Council of Bishops in France.

More than 80 per cent of France's 60 million people are Roman Catholic, 2 per cent are Protestant, 1 per cent Jewish and between 5 and 10 per cent Muslim.

Kenyan church leaders call for reintroduction of religious education

Fredrick Nzwilli

Nairobi (ENI) – Appalled at escalating violence in schools, church leaders in Kenya have called for the re-introduction of compulsory religious education as part of a list of other measures to rectify a chronic situation in their country.

The church leaders attending a consultative forum on School Safe Zones (SSZ) on November 14 said the abandonment of compulsory religious education in the early 1990s had contributed to the decline of discipline in schools.

"We are calling for it [religious education] since it teaches children morals and the fear of God. There are bound to be a lot of problems the moment it is eliminated, since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi told ENI in Nairobi.

The vision of SSZ is linked to the premise that schools in Africa can be made safe learning environments and become a stabilizing influence for society. It is an initiative of Church World Service (CWS) and its African partners. CWS is the global humanitarian agency of the 36 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican member denominations of the (US) National Council of Churches.

"The concept is an opportunity to restore dignity in our schools and our children. We have been traumatized by incidents of violence and insecurity," the Rev. Jesse Kamau, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, told the meeting. He said the adult world was "setting the wrong role model. Our children have witnessed violence and neglect. They have learned to fight at home."

The minister for education, George Saitoti, responding to the request for religious education, called in a speech for careful consideration of religious education in schools.

In a keynote address, Saitoti told church leaders that unrest in schools was a clear indicator of an unsafe learning environment in a country where, he noted, churches sponsor 50 per cent of the schools and run many of their own institutions.

Egypt cracks down on converts to Christianity

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) – In a harsh crackdown during the last two weeks of October, Egypt's state security police arrested and tortured a Christian couple from Muslim background, along with 11 other Egyptian citizens accused of forging Christian identity papers for former Muslims.

At least 10 more Christians were detained and subjected to torture in the sweep, said to be headed by two security police officers known for illegal and cruel tactics against Christian converts.

Mohammed Ahmed Imam Kordy and his wife Sahar El-Sayed Abdel Ghany were arrested in Alexandria on October 18. The police action apparently came after the wife was implicated in a complaint extorted under police torture that she had helped another Egyptian woman secure false identity papers.

Two days after their detention, the two were transferred to a Cairo police station where they were beaten, hung by their arms, and bloated painfully with air blown into their bodies. They were denied any food while detained under intense interrogation in central Cairo's El-Mosky police station.

The husband and wife were not brought before the prosecutor until October 22, four days after their arrest. Under Egyptian law, the police are required to produce accused detainees before a prosecutor within 24 hours of their arrest.

The couple reportedly told the prosecutor that they had indeed changed their own names; however, they declared that they did not know it was illegal for them to change their religious identity. Since it was commonly known that Christians in Egypt could convert to Islam and change their identity papers, they stated, they assumed that Muslims had the same rights.

The couple named two Coptic priests who they said had helped them change their religious identity, both of whom have died in the past three years.

Although lawyers intervened to obtain the couple's release on bail, the wife was sent to prison October 23 for a month while the case is under investigation. Her husband was ordered released but remains under charge. They have two teenage daughters.

Meanwhile, 11 more arrests were reported, including the arrests of three Coptic women who had converted to Islam several years ago but have since returned to their Christian faith. The three face charges of bribing government employees and obtaining false identity papers.

In addition, Compass has obtained the names of eight government employees known to have been arrested in connection with the case.

An additional 10 Christians have been detained in the widening sweep of arrests said to be organized by Lt. Sayed Zaky, a criminal investigation officer known for following illegal procedures in detaining Christians.

Although Lt. Zaky informed the prosecutor that the newly accused Christians were

arrested off the street, local sources confirmed that they were taken forcibly from their homes in the middle of the night. "They were breaking down doors, searching their homes, abusing the parents in front of their children, all in a very humiliating way," the sources said.

Those arrested are reportedly being tortured by Lt. Walid El-Dossoky, who has a long-term reputation for inflicting cruel torture upon particularly the women Christian converts. Numerous complaints have been filed to human rights organizations against him.

Religious Apartheid

Although Egypt's Coptic Christians make up more than 10 percent of the national population, the government is accused of blatant "religious apartheid" for its discriminatory laws favoring the Muslim majority. Under the law, it is not illegal for an Egyptian to convert from one religion to another, but in practice, Muslims who become Christians face arrest, torture and ongoing threats to their lives.

While Christian citizens who want to convert to Islam are free to adopt Muslim names and change their official religious identity, these rights are denied to Muslims who convert to Christianity. Under the law, it is not illegal for an Egyptian to convert from one religion to another, but in practice, Muslims who become Christians face arrest, torture and ongoing threats to their lives.

In the face of such persecution, many such converts have tried to change their religious status without government permission, leaving themselves open to the charge of falsifying official documents.

In the wake of this latest crackdown, a group of former Muslims who have converted to Christianity issued an anonymous declaration from Cairo on October 26.

"We are between the jaws of the constitution and the legislation," the Christian converts state, noting the dilemma between constitutional guarantees of freedom of belief and Islamic law demanding that unrepentant apostates be executed.

Asserting their rights as Egyptian citizens to equal treatment under the laws of the land, the converts demand that all cases of falsified identities against Christian converts be dropped unconditionally.

"The Egyptian government is itself responsible for this illegal action," the declaration stated, "because it has deprived us of one of our basic legal rights, to embrace a new faith and change our name, our identity and our official papers. Give us our rights, and we will not falsify these things."

"Is it logical," the converts ask, "that the person who chooses a religion other than Islam is accused of blasphemy, and the opposite is not applied?" In fact, the statement notes, Egypt's Christians were all being given the freedom to change their beliefs. "But here Muslims are persecuted, because they are not enjoying that same right!"

Church

Muslim and Christian students clash at a Nigerian University

Obed Minchakpu

Lagos, Nigeria (Compass) — Over the past nine months, violent clashes between Muslim and Christian students at educational institutions across Nigeria have increased, with the latest incident occurring at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in the northern state of Kaduna.

A female Christian student was attacked and critically injured on September 23 after Muslim students accused her of blasphemy against the prophet Mohammed. That attack sparked a violent clash between Christian and Muslim students that resulted in more injuries, although no deaths were reported.

The Muslim vice-chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, told Compass that the clash occurred when two female students, a Muslim and a Christian, engaged in a religious discussion which degenerated into a heated argument. The Muslim student then went around

campus announcing the alleged blasphemy to other Muslim students, who began attacking Christians.

Mahdi called police to the campus and they curtailed the violence before it spread.

Religious violence became prominent on Nigerian campuses three decades ago. In 1981, Muslim students at the University of Ibadan pulled down a statue of Jesus Christ at the university's chapel, leading to a fight between Muslim and Christian students.

In 1987, a major clash occurred at the Kaduna State College of Education, Kafanchan, when a female Muslim student attacked a Christian preacher, alleging that he had blasphemed the prophet Mohammed. The crisis escalated, engulfing major towns and cities in northern Nigeria. Hundreds of Christians were killed and many churches were destroyed.

Kaduna has suffered more interreligious tension on campuses in recent years than other Nigerian states. Clashes have occurred at half a dozen different institutions.

In other incidents, the government of the state of Osun, southwestern Nigeria, has ordered an immediate halt to Christian worship in the chapel at the

Comprehensive Health Center in Iree.

While on an official visit to the facility on October 23, Lanre Afolabi, Osun state commissioner for health, ordered the closure of the chapel and stopped Christian worship there.

The commissioner justified his action by saying that Christian worship disturbs patients.

"It is wrong for the Christian community here to turn the health center into a religious ground," Afolabi told journalists. "Hospitals are not places of worship."

Finally, the government of the state of Lagos has demolished two church buildings belonging to the Four Square Gospel Church and the Global Evangelical Ministries in the capital city.

Bishop Lanre Obembe, of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), characterized the church demolitions as "a betrayal of trust on the side of the government of Lagos state."

"It was a surprise when we discovered that two more churches were demolished yesterday (October 26) without due regard to normal procedure," Obembe told Compass. "The governor had assured us that he would put a stop to the exercise after we protested over such demolitions in the past."

"We were taken unawares when a team of Lagos state government officials accompanied by fierce-looking, fully armed policemen invaded our church and demolished it," said Rev. Adebiyi Olaoye, pastor of Global Evangelical Ministries in the district of Ikeja. "We lost property worth over \$25,000 dollars."



The chapel at Ahmadu Bello University where the statue was torn down.

Churches uniting in Christ 'finding momentum'

James Solheim

Louisville, Kentucky (Episcopal News Service) — One of the boldest efforts in ecumenical history to build Christian unity has entered a new phase, one that is showing promise, according to participants.

Dr. Bertrice Wood, director of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), began a recent meeting of its Coordinating Council with the positive assessment that "Churches Uniting in Christ is finding momentum in relation to solid work that has been done this past year in the three primary areas of its life — local/regional initiatives, racial justice, and the reconciliation of ministries."

Today nine denominations participate in CUIC which was inaugurated on January 20, 2002, by the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the International Council of Community Churches. In recent years two other churches,

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northern Province of the Moravian Church, have joined as "partners in mission and dialogue."

As it moves into its new phase, it draws on the vision of its predecessor, the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), that in the early 1960s shaped a dream for organic union. Over the years that dream was modified when it became clear that the participating churches did not agree on how to order their ministries. The Presbyterians, for example, ordain elders while the Episcopalians consecrate bishops in the historic episcopate. Yet continuing cooperation drew the churches closer together and in 1999 COCU proposed a covenant relationship based on "visible marks of unity" they share.

Ministry still an issue

Meeting in Louisville in the national offices of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on October 24-25, 2003, the Coordinating Council heard reports from its three task forces and began a process of strategic planning for the future.

Plans are being made to increase the awareness and participation of local churches of CUIC in communities around the country and among the seminaries and theological communities in the member communions, especially in exploring the development of a common polity.

The work of the ministry task force is addressing the thorny issues related to the reconciliation of ordained ministries among the various denominations and presented a draft text for the reconciliation of ministries.

An updated Liturgy of the Lord's Supper will soon be available on the CUIC web site.

The aim of CUIC is full communion, not a merger of churches but a mutual sharing in mission and the recognition and reconciliation of the churches' ordained ministries. Each communion retains its own identity and decision-making structures, but all have pledged before God to draw closer in sacred things — including regular sharing of the Lord's Supper and common mission, especially in combating racism.

Attack on faith schools shows crisis in secularism says Vienna professor

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) — An Austrian theologian and sociologist says verbal attacks by a British academic on faith schools in his and other countries is part of a growing "crisis of secularism" in the face of renewed spirituality in European culture.

"Secularism is in crisis when its proponents feel they have to fight back with bills and directives," argues Paul Zulehner, dean of Vienna University's Roman Catholic theology faculty. "They've seen the revival of spirituality, and are clearly afraid of it."

The Austrian priest issued a strong rebuttal against the disapproval of faith schools expressed by public figures such as Oxford University biologist Richard Dawkins, a committed atheist.

Zulehner told ENI that research has produced clear evidence of a continent-wide revival of religiousness, beginning in large cities, which was reflected increasingly in advertising and mass culture. However, he noted that the "respiritualization" was a "protest against secularization" rather than a return to established faiths.

"It's individualistic and based on free choice, rather than linked with existing religious traditions — but it requires understanding from mainstream churches," continued Zulehner, who co-directed the European Values Study, which charted attitudes to religion and morality in 1981, 1990 and 1999.

Government plans to expand support for Britain's 7000 government-funded religious schools have been criticized over the past two years by those who argue that they fuel intolerance and social divisiveness. In 2002, a group of scientists and prominent Anglicans, led by Dawkins and Bishop Richard Harries of Oxford, demanded "strict monitoring" of curricula, especially in faith schools offering lessons on Creationism.

Pressure on faith schools has also increased in the Netherlands, where campaigners in January said they planned to demand the closure of 37 Muslim primary schools as well as the disbanding of more than 2000 Catholic and almost the same number of Protestant schools.

In neighboring Belgium, churches are resisting government plans to "ensure neutrality in the teaching" by allowing pupils at French-speaking state schools to choose between existing lessons on religion and new "philosophy workshops."

Zulehner said no campaign had been launched against faith schools in Austria and Germany, where theologians maintained a "respectful dialogue" with geneticists and other scientists.

Movie Reviews

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World

Stars Russell Crowe, Paul Bettany, Max Pirkis, Billy Boyd, James D'Arcy, George Innes.

Screenplay by Peter Weir and John Collee. Directed by Peter Weir.

Marian Van Til

John ("Jack") Aubrey, exceptional post-captain in the Royal Navy, and Stephen Maturin, skilled naval physician and surgeon on Aubrey's ship "Surprise," are alive and well to those legions of folks who read and re-read Patrick O'Brian's extraordinary 20-book enterprise about these early 19th century characters and their world. And now Aubrey and Maturin are inhabiting a big-budget movie.

Aubrey is a large, handsome but slightly paunchy man with golden hair, startlingly blue eyes and a boating voice, an open-hearted man with an endearing penchant for mangling the simplest proverbs and laughing red-faced at his own jokes. He values honor and expects it in others. He exudes natural authority. This ability, along with his uncommon sailing talent, he is putting to fine use in King George's service at sea. He's an avid and accomplished amateur musician, a violinist who also loves to sing. But ashore, his own integrity translates into rather too easily trusting others, thus his affairs on land often lay him by the lee.

Maturin (pronounced MATCH-in) has two social strikes against him in his turn-of-the-19th century world: he was illegitimate, the bastard son of an Irish officer and a Catalan woman; and he is Catholic. He is an ill-looking little man with piercing, reptilian eyes; his narrow chest is usually covered with a grimy, blood- or food-marked waistcoat. He, too, is a musician, a cellist, though less accomplished than Jack. He is a man of science who glories in the created world and in exploring its numerous yet-unnamed species during his naval travels. He is self-protective and secretive, qualities which tend to thwart easy closeness to others but which serve him well as an intelligence agent for the British against Napoleon.

Aubrey and Maturin meet at a concert on the first page of O'Brian's first historical novel about their world. They gradually become "particular friends." In the close friendship of these opposite



characters O'Brian has created an astute and delightful study in male friendship which rivals any in English literature. (O'Brian, though elusive himself – his Irish writer's persona and name were a fabrication – was a biographer as well as a novelist, and it shows in his creation and dissection of characters.) It is these men, their friendship and their at-sea world whom Australian film director Peter Weir has now brought to the screen. Or is it?

The measure of a man

Weir long balked at any attempt to film O'Brian's novels, which are complex, multi-faceted and erudite, not to mention written in Jane-Austen-style language of the period (O'Brian greatly admired Austen) in a way which makes the reader's future-modern world seem as spectrally shrouded as a frigate in a fog bank. So the books don't easily lend themselves to filming. But at last Weir relented.

In the end, he and co-screenwriter John Collee (who is a physician as well as writer) distilled incidents from two books in the series, the first and the 10th. This

explains the film's unwieldy title. For all that, the title is not terribly appropriate, since the incidents in the film are mostly screenwriters' fictions practiced upon O'Brian's fiction. And, more importantly to O'Brian readers and sailing aficionados: in the film Jack Aubrey is already a post-captain; a "master and commander" is an officer waiting for his glorious post-captaincy one rung down the hierarchical ladder, an officer who is addressed as "Captain" only as a courtesy.

I said the movie distills "incidents" from O'Brian's books. And therein lies the primary problem with this otherwise fine film. The plot features the English frigate "Surprise" embroiled in a life-and-death chase with the French privateer "Acheron" off the coast of Brazil and around the Horn of South America. That outline is filled in with both new material from the screenwriters and transformations of vignettes from the books – filled in with *incidents*. So we see indications that Aubrey and Maturin are friends: they play violin-cello duets to entertain themselves, accompanied by wine and

toasted cheese; they argue, not as Captain and surgeon-warrant officer but as friends; "enlightened" Stephen, at first appearing to be a pacifist, severely questions what he begins to think is Jack's obsession with capturing the Frenchmen (anathema to O'Brian's characters). We see that Jack has a corny sense of humor, and teases Stephen; that he is a canny and respected captain; that he runs a taut ship, though kindly. We get the impression that Stephen is not much of a sea-man, but we see that he's an adept naturalist and a quick hand with an amputation saw, and courageous and compelled enough to perform life-saving self-surgery. We see both Aubrey's and Maturin's interactions with 13-year-old midshipman Lord Blakeney, a "young gentleman" who has both the intelligence and discipline to be a fine officer and the curiosity and discipline to be an equally fine naturalist.

We also hear Aubrey's homily to a hapless young "Jonah," a disliked, "unlucky" officer thought to be bringing doom on the ship. Aubrey talks of inner strength and integrity, which will be necessary for the man to gain the respect of his fellows, and especially of his subordinates. And Aubrey rallies the whole ship's company with words about the necessity for discipline and perseverance in order to get their job done: surviving to fight a difficult enemy.

That's as close as the film gets to an overtly stated "message" or ongoing theme – in today's social climate, undoubtedly not a bad message. Mostly, we see the details of daily life in a small and precarious wooden world at sea, and the deadly effects of battle on that all-male microcosm of Britain, 1805. So despite Aubrey and Maturin as protagonists, the ship

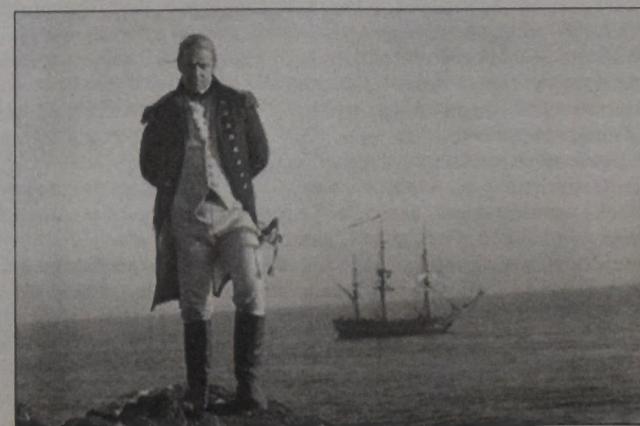
and its mostly unnamed company are really the stars of the film. If you're fond of or curious about that subject matter and don't mind a film constructed of loosely connected incidents rather than one with a tightly woven dramatic plot, you'll surely enjoy *Master and Commander*.

Appeal to two audiences

A film is not a book, of course, much less multiple books. A two-and-a-half hour film can do only so much when purporting to bring novels like O'Brian's to cinematic life. Of course film is an excellent medium for creating evocative visual worlds, but it is less good at delving into character subtleties and interior lives.

Weir was quite aware of the thousands of O'Brian readers (mostly well-educated, widely read and uncommonly picky!) who looked forward to the film with both eagerness and trepidation. But he had, first of all, to make a film that would appeal to the many thousands more "ordinary" film-goers in order to recoup its huge \$135 million budget. And so he hired one of today's biggest box-office draws to play Jack Aubrey, his fellow Australian Russell Crowe. Then he added Crowe's side-kick from *A Beautiful Mind*, Paul Bettany, as Maturin.

Both men are excellent actors and bring as much savvy and subtlety to their characters as the somewhat superficial Aubrey and Maturin film roles allowed. The film Aubrey doesn't – probably can't – bear the layered dimensions of O'Brian's Aubrey. We don't see the aching loneliness of command in this isolated, hierarchical world, and thus Aubrey's very real need of Maturin's friendship. Weir's Aubrey is an entirely



Reviews

Door To Door – the courage of an ordinary man

heroic, inspirational figure, war time's man of the hour. The film Maturin reveals none of the sharp wit, cantankerous brooding or often hastily covered vulnerability of O'Brian's Maturin. The physical stature and appearance of O'Brian characters is absolutely integral to their personalities and characters.

Those box-office considerations largely explain why Weir hired two actors who are so starkly physically different from O'Brian's Aubrey and Maturin: Crowe is fairly short, brown-eyed and swarthy; Bettany is good-looking, blonde and towers over Crowe. Weir thought, he admitted in an interview, that if he had chosen actors to fit O'Brian's descriptions of the men (actors who inevitably would have been unknown) viewers might dismiss them as buffoons: Laurel and Hardy at sea. Box office "needs" also help explain why, despite all the striving for historical authenticity in the ship, its sailing, its life and its company, the film Aubrey is chummy with his crew in a way the "real" Aubrey would have found dangerously innovative, a mere howling democracy not to be countenanced in the Royal Navy of 1805, or in any navy (or other military forces) of any time, for that matter.

Get thee to the books!

Despite all that, Russell Crowe has called *Master and Commander* a \$135 million art film. Though that's overstating the case, it is surely an exceptional film in today's sea of movies. It will be best seen by O'Brian readers as an engaging film that brings to vivid life plausible, O'Brian-inspired episodes and characters from the early 19th century age of sail. Viewers who haven't read the books will doubtless find the film's re-creation of shipboard life both astonishing and fascinating. They will undoubtedly appreciate the portrayal of both Aubrey and Maturin more than do some O'Brian readers who feel a proprietary intimacy with the characters he created.

The historical details are so accurate and painstaking – right down to Maturin's omission, during a communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer, of its last phrase, as was (and is) the Catholic custom – that this fictional film could be used educationally as a historical documentary about life at sea

Door To Door

Turner Network Television

Directed by: Steven Schachter

Written by: William H. Macy and Steven Schachter

Cast: William H. Macy, Kyra Sedgwick, Kathy Baker and Helen Mirren

Reviewed by Ron Vandenburg

Recently my wife and I watched this year's Emmy Awards, where we discovered one particular film continued to receive honors for best movie, best actor, best director and best writing. At first, it is hard to believe that a film about a door to door salesman would be celebrated, but then again stories of the common man have been a major focus of drama in the twentieth century. Remember Arthur Miller's classic *Death of a Salesman*.

The main character in the film *Door to Door*, recently released to video, is Bill Porter, a young man looking for a career and wanting to follow in the footsteps of his salesman father now deceased. His mother is his one and only encourager; she gives him the courage to walk into the Watkins Products Company to ask for a job. It takes special courage for him to do so because Bill has cerebral palsy.

in that era. Accompanying this visual authenticity is an unusual soundtrack which not only captures the creaks, groans, bells, billowing sails, rippling water and many other sounds of a wooden sailing ship in motion, but features the music of Mozart, Bach, Boccherini and Vaughan Williams (and a few pieces composed for the film).

Though *Master and Commander* is clearly entertainment, it is intelligent entertainment, and its best special effect may be to bring new readers to O'Brian's "best historical fiction ever written."

*Former C.C. editor Marian Van Til lives in Lewiston, N.Y., and is now a freelance writer, editor and researcher. She regularly writes reviews for *Faith Today* and the *Alban Institute* in Washington, D.C., and provides concert program notes for *Chorus Niagara*. But her daily work is researching and writing a book for biblically attuned music lovers about Handel and his Old Testament oratorios. (The book will take at least another two years to complete, Marian estimates.) She also works part-time at a village public library and as a church organist/choir director.*



William H. Macy as Bill Porter

What is great about the film, however, is that it doesn't focus on the fact that he is a man with cerebral palsy.

Bill's condition is such that a social worker once told him that his ambition and drive were bad for him, and he should just sit back and receive disability payments. William H. Macy, character actor of many roles including ones in *E.R.* and in *Fargo*, plays Bill Porter so convincingly that very quickly we as audience can get past the prosthetic ears, makeup and slurred speech to see a man caring deeply about his work and independence, his customers and his mother (wonderfully played by Helen Mirren).

I was afraid the film would follow the Hollywood path of how a person with disabilities redeems those all around them, a kind of "We now see where we all went wrong, and we owe it all to" mentality recently seen in a film like *Radio* with Cuba Gooding, Jr. In *Door to Door*, when Bill goes for his job interview, he faces the boss's prejudice about his appearance with an aggressive proposal to take on the worst district in his city of Portland, Oregon. Though he cannot tie his own necktie or shoelaces or drive a car, when he arrived at this new location, Bill and his mother refuse to shrink from the literal uphill battle he will have to face.

As Bill struggles each day to win a number of small personal victories, however, he also has to deal with the slow deterioration of

Bill's interactions with his customers. The film portrays Bill Porter as an invisible thread that connects his customers to the lives of others in their neighborhood. The film is divided up into segments that represent different decades of Bill's life, so we see him and his customers grow and age in their relationships.

In the tradition of movies like *It's a Wonderful Life*, this movie shows the difference one person can make in the lives of others. Through these decades, we see each of these people and their stories through Bill's eyes. The story does not turn Bill into a miracle man, but portrays him as a man who encounters problems and thinks on his feet. Sadly, one relationship passes Bill by, and it is only when it is too late that he realizes the impact he has had on that life.

Door to Door ends with another realistic struggle as Bill faces his own obsolescence in the face of changing technologies. After accomplishing his dream of becoming Salesman of the Year, Bill faces this new problem. In a world on telemarketing and online sales, who needs face-to-face service? Bill fights his own company to continue serving his own customers, but with his own deteriorating health and older age, even with a helper, he is unable to keep up with the new ways.

Ironically, Bill is saved by a writer interested in his life story, so here the film's own origins and the real story of Bill begin to merge with articles, a book and a movie assuring us that Bill will be all right. In reference to Bill (always the salesman), a final screen shot tells us that we can order the Watkins products at www.billporter.com. I recommend the mosquito repellent.



Knowing God is more than knowing about Him; it is a matter of dealing with Him as He opens up to you, and being dealt with by Him as He takes knowledge of you. Knowing about Him is a necessary precondition of trusting in Him, but the width of our knowledge about Him is no gauge of our knowledge of Him. ... James I. Packer, *Knowing God*

Review/Christian Living

Radio proves heroes come in unlikely packages

Heidi Vanderslikke

At the end of a week of rain and dreary skies, Jack and I were looking for a feel-good movie to brighten our Saturday evening. *Radio* was just the ticket. Inspired by a true story, this film is set in a small South Carolina town in the fall of 1976. Cuba Gooding Jr. brings dignity to the role of the title character.

Radio is a mentally challenged black teenager, whose real name is James Robert Kennedy. He lives with his mom on the poor side of town. She loves her son dearly, but in order to provide a living for them she must work long hours at the hospital. Radio spends his days mostly alone, roaming the area with his shopping cart full of treasures. He finds joy in little things like gliding down the road on his cart, listening to one of his many radios, or watching the local high school football team train for their upcoming season.

Ed Harris plays Coach Harold Jones, the embodiment of everyone's favorite high school teacher. Coach Jones is compassionate, but tough, determined and competent. He works his boys hard and has a special passion for football. A loving husband and dedicated father, he struggles at times to relate to his teenage daughter.

One day Radio falls victim to the mindless abuse of some of the football players and is rescued by the coach. He decides to involve Radio with the team and a great relationship begins. Eventually Radio works his way into the hearts of most of the students and staff at Hannah High School. He becomes the football team's most ardent supporter. The Yellow Jackets' fans are amused by Radio's antics on the sidelines, while team members and the coach patiently endure his sometimes overzealous support.

Touching and being touched

Although often misunderstood, Radio remains a person of warmth, humor and integrity. The school's principal remarks at one point that she isn't sure whether they're actually helping Radio, or turning him into a "glorified mascot." Anyone who has spent time with mentally challenged people will appreciate her words. There's a fine line between laughing with someone, or laughing at him. And yet, as Coach Jones later observes, while people may think they have something to teach Radio, it is Radio who teaches valuable lessons to those he loves.

Conflict comes in the form of football hero Johnny Clay, along with his ambitious and influential father, Frank. The Clays view Radio as a distraction who might hinder Johnny's chance at an athletic scholarship and future fame in the sports world. Football is an integral part of life in Anderson, South Carolina. The locals gather regularly at Don and Del's Barbershop for coffee and post-game banter. The quality of the coffee becomes a metaphor for the football season, which isn't going particularly well. Frank Clay tries to convince the townsfolk that Radio is a contributing factor to the Yellow Jackets' mediocre performance.

At first glance Coach Jones is the hero of the story. People frequently ask him why he cares about Radio. Questioned by Radio's mom he answers, "Because it's the right thing to do. Isn't that reason enough?" The look on her face says she doesn't believe him. Eventually the real reason behind his benevolence surfaces, when he confesses some lingering guilt to his daughter. It is sadly realistic that people wonder what motivates Coach Jones, instead of asking why everyone else doesn't demonstrate the same kindness.

There are no "Disney moments" in the film where Radio learns to play football and saves the day. He does not win over Johnny Clay's hard-nosed father, or even learn to read and write. But if a hero is defined more by who a person is than what he does, Radio is clearly the hero of the tale. He teaches by example the virtues of love, loyalty and living a full life, regardless of circumstances. The payoff for movie goers is a happy ending and the opportunity to see the real-life Radio and Coach Jones at the end of the story. If you're looking for a pick-me-up, this is the movie to see.



Cuba Gooding and Ed Harris.

Moral ambiguities —

Ron de Boer

I'll tell you right off the top that this is an article long on questions and short on answers. Like every annoying teacher when faced with a question, I usually ask another question. And at the end of a string of questions, my hope is that I will have a glimpse of an answer. But the older I get, the more I realize that definitive answers about anything are in short supply these days — especially when debating what's right and what's wrong.

My daughters wear these WWJD bracelets — What Would Jesus Do? — the idea being that any problem or decision with which they are faced, they need only ask what Jesus would do. The answer usually presents itself clearly.

Trouble is, most of us ask, "What would Peter or Melinda or Bruce or Lois or — my favorite — Ron do?" It's the latter that usually gets me into trouble.

So let's wage a debate between that little devil on your left shoulder and that little angel on your right. I'm going to present you with some case studies, each of which concludes with a number of questions. At the end of each of these case studies, ask what you would do and then ask what Jesus would do. There is no Readers-Digest-type scoring system to measure the degree to which one lives a Christian life at the end. This is just an exercise — a ten minute workout for your conscience, if you will.

Case Study #1:

When I was a student at Dordt College back in the 1980s, I played on the Dordt Blade hockey team, which traveled throughout the Midwest and into Canada for exhibition games since we didn't have a league to play in.

One American Thanksgiving we traveled to Winnipeg and found ourselves in the heart of downtown, looking for an arena. While sitting at a stop light, one of the players in the back noticed a bank and announced he needed money. The other players followed him out the sliding door and into the bank and told the driver — me! — to wait for them. I suddenly found myself alone in a van in a strange city with strange street names in heavy snowfall.

I hoped my teammates would reappear before the light turned green. They didn't. So I just sat. Horns were honking, fists were shaking, and my teammates didn't seem in any hurry to deposit themselves back in the van.

So I did what every Christian College kid would do — I got out of the van, lifted the hood, and pretended I was having engine problems (indirect lie #1). When the police officer walking the Winnipeg downtown beat knocked on my window and asked what was up, I said I think it overheated (lie #2). He offered to take a

look when I said it had been acting up all day (lie #3), and when he didn't find anything, suggested I start it up. Of course, it jumped to life immediately and hummed like a sewing machine. Cue my surprised look (lie #4).

Just then my teammates came down the bank steps and piled into the van. I thanked the police officer, pretended not to interpret his perplexed face (lie #5), and before he could put the whole thing together, I threw the van into gear and pulled into traffic.

We, of course, laughed hysterically until we got to the arena. Good college fun, right? Boys will be boys.

Should I have told the truth and admitted to being illegally parked, getting a ticket my parents would have to pay for since I didn't have any money? Should I have parked legally and paid the rightful fare? Or should I have stayed put, inconveniencing everyone else — I didn't know them anyway, right? — snarling traffic, so that I wouldn't lose my friends and have to answer to the Dordt Dean as to why there were seven fewer students second semester?

Insert your name in the blank: What would _____ do? What would Jesus do?

Case Study #2:

When Karen and I moved into our first rental house, we discovered that the previous tenants had not canceled their cable television. Great, we thought — free cable! Should we call the cable company and cancel, then reactivate under our own name? Is it wrong when we actually didn't take the cable, but instead stumbled upon it because someone else had neglected to cut service? We knew we would never get into trouble, that when the cable company or the previous tenants discovered the mistake, they wouldn't dare blame us for taking advantage — who wouldn't?

Does that make taking what clearly isn't ours okay once we discover we won't be held responsible and that anyone in our shoes would do the same? Do consequences and accountability motivate us to do what is right or wrong?

What would _____ do? What would Jesus do?

Case Study #3:

We knew an upstanding Christian — Christian school supporter, elder, catechism teacher — who was sitting in his car one day when he was rear-ended by a young man. When the two got out to inspect the damage, they discovered a dent in the Christian's bumper. Clearly the young man was in the wrong. He apologized profusely. He offered to pay for the bumper in cash since he couldn't afford higher insurance premiums.

It turns out he had recently graduated

Christian Living

a debate between my left ear and my right ear



Honest, officer, I know I wasn't speeding now but I did 20 minutes ago and I deserve a ticket. Oh, and I forgot to signal when....

university and was living paycheck-to-paycheck, holding down two jobs to pay his student loans. But he didn't use his circumstances to garner sympathy from this upstanding Christian. He knew he was in the wrong and he wanted to pay. So they agreed that the Christian would get three estimates of damage and present them to the young man.

He did and presented the cheapest one. The young man said he'd have the money within the week. In good Christian charity, the Christian agreed. In the interim, however, the Christian discovered that if he attached a chain to the bumper and tied the chain around a street pole and drove gently, he could pull the dent right out of the bumper. You couldn't even tell a dent had been there.

A week later, he collected the \$750 from the young man, shopped for a new television, and told all his friends how clever he'd been. The young man, of course, never found out.

His understanding was that the \$750 would go to fixing a car he had clearly damaged. The Christian knew the young man knew this and decided it didn't matter how he spent his money – everyone was happy.

Did he have the right to spend this money? Should he have returned the \$750 to the young man and announced he was able to fix it without cost? What would _____ do? What would Jesus do?

Case Study #4:

A company across the country wants

you to come work for them and talks to you about the possibility of your moving across several time zones to take a job. They will fly you and your spouse there, put you up in a nice hotel for three nights, give you a rental car and tickets to a show.

Trouble is, although flattered by the prospect, you know there's no way you are going to uproot your family and move across the country. But the company interested in you doesn't know you've already made that decision. So you take the flight, you enjoy three nights in a motel, you go through the motions of the interview and then you fly home.

How often does a free trip like that come your way? You might even convince yourself that you might have taken the job. Is taking the trip all part of the business-recruitment game? Or did you steal money from that company because you had no intention of moving? What would _____ do? What would Jesus do?

If you zipped through the four case studies and are clear on exactly what you'd do, then perhaps you can help me with this one.

Case Study #5:

While driving to Florida this past summer, a pair of mirrored sun-glasses called a Georgia state trooper appeared at my window after I'd pulled onto the shoulder of Interstate 75 with lights flashing in my rearview mirror. He told me I had been speeding in a construction

zone. He took my license and he reappeared with a speeding ticket – for \$150 US! I had ten days to pay for it or I could appear in the Macon County, Georgia court-house to contest it.

We traveled on to Florida, vacationed, then turned our van around and traveled back up the I-75 to Ontario. When I told friends and family of my brush with the law, I was surprised by the responses I received. Most people asked me if the state trooper made me pay it right away, and when I said "No," they offered this advice: "I wouldn't pay it – when's the next time you're going to be in Georgia?" When I informed one friend that the ticket stated that my failure to pay would result in a warrant for my arrest, he said, "I wouldn't pay it – when's the next time

you're going to be in Georgia?"

So I set the ticket aside and waited for the devil on my left shoulder to go one-on-one with the angel on my right. But why was I even hesitating? I had broken the law. I owed the Macon County Sheriff's Department \$150.

So I did a little informal poll with several of my Christian friends and was astonished at the number of people who have never paid for speeding tickets they received in the US. So the little devil on my left shoulder clears his throat and says, "If they didn't pay and didn't get arrested after all these years, why should you? Come on, think of what \$150 could buy."

But then the angel guy on my other shoulder jabs me in the neck with the pointy end of his harp and says, "What would Jesus do?" And of course, it's simple.

He'd pay the ticket in Canadian dollars!

So I go to the Bank of Montreal and ask the teller for a money order to be made out to the Macon County Sheriff's department. "So, you want it in American money?" says the teller.

I grin. "No, Canadian," I say.

You see, I had checked the ticket forward and backward and nowhere did it say the \$150 was to be in US funds. The ticket said pay \$150 and it was signed by State Trooper Howard. So I did.

The teller shook her head. "They're not going to like that."

The angel, sensing my guilt, strums his harp at this point. The devil stamps up

and down and tells me not to listen to Mr. Goody-two-shoes. "If you're going to pay the \$150, at least save yourself the exchange," he says.

So, I drop the envelope in the red mailbox, skip home, and put the whole matter of State Trooper Howard behind me.

Until yesterday, I opened the envelope from the Macon County Sheriff's office. Inside was my money order for \$150 Canadian along with a note. "Please pay in US funds."

The angel immediately begins whistling his I-told-you-so tune.

Today, the devil is playing with me again. I consider putting the money order back in the bank then telling the Sheriff's department they forgot to send me my original money order and since I already paid, there's no way I'm paying for another one. I mean, when am I ever going to be in Georgia again? I consider heeding the advice of my friends and tearing up the ticket altogether.

What would you do?

Before I can even ask the second question, I see one of the kids' WWJD bracelets lying on the table, and the clarity about what I have to do is obvious. I can lie and pretend all I want, but I will always know I was dishonest and God will always know, too. I may never be in Georgia again, but I certainly will one day be traveling in the sweet hereafter, won't I? And I sure as shootin' don't want to be pulled off of that road.

Before the devil can jab with me with his spear, I flick him off my shoulder, grab the money order and head to the bank.

A friend of mine told me recently he thought the whole WWJD fad was a crock. Sappy, he called them. But if you believe in Jesus' goodness, his gentleness, his purity, his honesty, and his perfection, most of your right-vs.-wrong conundrums are easy to settle.

With this in mind, I'd have to say Jesus would have told the officer in Winnipeg the truth, repented and faced the music; he would have canceled the cable television, phoned the landlord and told him immediately of the oversight; he would have told the young man to keep the \$750 because he was able to fix his mistake; he would have told the company he had no intention of moving and they should spend their interviewing budget on another candidate.

And he would have sent the \$150 in US funds the minute he got back to Ontario.

Paul tells us to be imitators of Christ. I don't know about you, but I have a long way to go in that department.

Book Review

Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World

By Jean Bethke Elshain. Basic Books. 240 pp. \$36.

Reviewed by Harry Antonides

Jean Bethke Elshain is professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago, a prolific author and feisty defender of America's right to defend itself.

She is no stranger to controversy nor cowed by the rhetorical din of battle that surrounds the topic of this book. She seeks to bring Christian insight to bear on what is obviously a very controversial and divisive issue. That makes two reasons why this book is worth reading by all who look for moral clarity despite the fog of confusion surrounding the role of the United States on the world scene.

This book can be read as a commentary and explication of the statement "What We're Fighting For: A Letter From America," published in February, 2002, and signed by sixty academics and intellectuals who wanted to accomplish two things with this publication. First, to indicate to leading figures in other countries that not all American intellectuals and academics are opposed to the American war effort. Second, to offer a conceptual framework within which to assess America's efforts. (This Letter is included as an appendix, complete with the names of the signatories and extended notes.)

The American media mostly ignored this document, while a number of intellectuals felt it necessary to distribute a "Letter from United States Citizens to Friends in Europe," intended to set the record straight by explaining that the "correct" American response is to condemn the American military action (which at this time only involved the action in Afghanistan). One way to do that was to describe the destruction of the war as "immeasurable." They predicted that millions of the Afghanistan people would be filled with "moral desperation and hatred" as they "watch helplessly as their world is devastated" by the United States.

Just War Against Terror tackles all the difficult and controversial issues related to the war against terrorism. Elshain pays a great deal of attention to the historic just war principles, as first articulated by Augustine (354-430). In that context she sets out her views on the meaning of September 11,

2001, the nature of Islamist fundamentalism, suicidal terrorism, the relationship of church and state, the role of the United States on the world scene, preemptive military action, and a perspective on war and peace.

This is not yet another dispassionate, academic lecture that leaves the author a lot of room to come down on both sides of an issue, or that simply goes with the flow in American academia. Elshain writes as an American citizen who hails from "a small people, Volga Germans, who would have been murdered or exiled to the Soviet Union's farthest provinces by Joseph Stalin had they remained in Russia rather than making the wrenching journey to America in the waning years of the nineteenth century..."

Elshain wrote this book because she was provoked by much of what has been written and said about terrorism and the events of September 11, 2001... and "because I have grandchildren who deserve to grow up in a world of civic peace, as do all of the world's children; because I am a believer who believes that other believers have the same rights I do because we are all equal before God."

She explains: "The burden of the argument in the pages to follow is that we must and will fight – not in order to conquer any countries or to destroy peoples or religions, but to defend what we are and what we, at our best, represent. We are not obliged to defend everything we have done, or are doing, as a country. But we do bear an obligation to defend the ideal of free citizens in a polity whose ordering principles make civic freedom and the free exercise of religion available to all. Moreover, international civic peace vitally depends on America's ability to stay true to its own principles...."

The first questions she raises is "What happened on September 11?" A simple question, you might say. But take another look at the vastly different reactions to this horrible event that has been indelibly imprinted on the minds of the panic-stricken survivors. Millions and millions more all over the world watched with terrifying fascination the televised pictures of the crumbling and burning Manhattan towers and the Pentagon building. They will never forget those pictures of flames and smoke and utter devastation.



Jean Bethke Elshain

What equally horrified all civilized people was the jubilant and wildly cheering crowds in Arab countries who rejoiced and celebrated the "brave martyrs" who performed this "glorious deed" of wreaking vengeance on the "Great Satan." How is such hatred possible, and what moves well-educated, seemingly normal people (normal enough to live among unsuspecting Americans) to commit such a heinous crime against innocent men, women and even little children?

The American people, rallied by a determined President Bush, came together, united in their anger and grief about such cruelty and terrible loss of life. But the sense of togetherness did not last. Soon enough we began to hear that the problem was not with the attackers but with America itself. If they hate us so much, there must be a reason; America had this attack coming because it behaves like a world bully that is responsible for the poverty and suffering of the Third World. This has become the mantra, eagerly broadcast in Europe, Canada and even in America itself.

Elshain disagrees, and she does so with careful analysis of the precise threats issued by Osama bin Laden then – and perhaps still – the fanatic leader of the terrorist Al Qaeda that has its octopus-like

tentacles in many countries. This is bin Laden's fatwa pronouncement in 1998: "I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshiped. Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my orders." At another occasion bin Laden instructed the faithful that to "kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is

an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it...."

Such war-like words fall uncomprehendingly on the ears of the sophisticated western secular elite. So they can safely ignore such chilling pronouncements except when bin Laden's followers crash airplanes into the heart of American cities and into the Pennsylvania countryside. How to explain such "unspeakable horror"? There must be some reason behind such extremism. Surely, no sane person would do such things unless they were provoked, unless they had a reason for doing what they did.

Elshain is convinced that we should take the fanatic haters of the United States, and in fact all western democratic countries, at their words. They really mean what they say, and we should be prepared to defend ourselves. However, she is equally insistent that our response must be nuanced. For one thing, we should realize that there is a significant element among Muslim believers that want to live at peace with their neighbors, and we should seek to work with them.

We also need to be nuanced in our use of military force, and she believes that we therefore need to revisit the classical teachings of just war that makes a crucial dis-

tinction between the actions of private citizens and a legitimate state. Unfortunately, this distinction is often lost on those who quote the biblical instructions about peace making. Other vital just war conditions are that no war may be for conquest, that the aim must be the furtherance of civic peace, and the means must be used very discriminately so that minimal damage is done and the lives of non-combatants are spared.

These are obviously hotly contested guidelines, and Elshain's provides a carefully guided tour through this moral landscape. She faults the church leaders who have used strong words to condemn the US but are often more guided by prevailing secular opinion than by just war principles that have evolved during two millennia of careful reflection and debate.

The author provides a helpful analysis of the task and nature of the state and the use of force. Pacifists who condemn all war, she believes, are conflating the peace in this world with the peace of the kingdom of God in the hereafter. In contrast, she thinks that Christians who want to take part in politics – and we are called to do so – must face the thorny issue of rampant evil in a dangerous world. It is a world where there are no final or perfect solutions and where we sometimes will have to get our hands dirty.

Her views of the role of the US as a world power is that such power can be abused, but also can and should be used for the war against the implacable enemies of freedom who kill indiscriminately and are driven by what can indeed be called a culture of death.

This is a gem of a book written with clarity and suffused with the wisdom that comes from a long history of Christian thought. The author tackles the most contentious and seemingly intractable issues of our time with gusto yet with carefully reasoned arguments. It should be in

every church
and
home library.

Jean Bethke Elshain
Author of Women and War

THE BURDEN
OF AMERICAN POWER
IN A VIOLENT WORLD

**JUST WAR
AGAINST
TERROR**

Poetry/Christian Living

Grasshoppers, plagues, and promises**The Weeks the Locusts Ate**

"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." Joel 2:25



hard cracked ground in the fields
beneath the leap of grasshoppers
days gnawed away by the stealth of summer

soul dry weeks without
long draughts of living water

soul dry weeks without the sprinkle
of His wisdom to ease out the wrinkles
wash into perspective the grit
of survival on this planet

II

His water refreshes
splashes in my face
when I hold his words before my eyes
take time to let them settle in my heart
sit closer
be more intent

and He promises to restore
the weeks the locusts have eaten

the prayers I could have prayed
the understanding I could have gained...

Splash
splash

of John the Baptist's diet
of locusts and wild honey

**Crickets and Grasshoppers**

We heard them in the Missouri evenings
like clicking sickles in the night air
an orchestra of chattering insects
performing into the wee hours

learned about Katydids
with ears in their knees
and other green long-horned
grasshoppers leaping
twenty times their body length
in meadow and field

chomping their way through
cotton corn clover
spitting juice the color
of tobacco when handled

knew about their short-horned
relatives jumping wingless
to escape my father's grain auger
after surviving their trip
through the combine

not unlike the ones
an eight year old grandson
ate for Fear Factor
at Bible Camp
live

Like the Plagues of Egypt He Said

the editorial in the local
paper compares this season
to the plagues of Egypt

threat of West Nile
Mad Cow crisis
grasshoppers
drought and forest fires
not mentioning SARS
or eastern power blackouts
floods and hurricanes
tonight I walk west through the field
as the sun settles into the hills

a neon pink light bulb
turned into the stiff grey smoky sky

soft wind sifts through the ripe barley
blows away all the mosquitos
even the grasshoppers
have disappeared for the evening

my prayer for rain
folds into the cracked seams

Linda Siebenga

**Developing new eyes
for the new year****Getting Unstuck**

Arlene Van Hove

grown out of our family of origin as well as our early marital relationships. When time goes on, however, and family and work life becomes more complicated, our adaptive ways of being are not helpful. So, we need to go back and begin to work at becoming what we are meant to be.

Courage, fear and prayer

We need courage to look at ourselves and embrace getting to know *who we really can become*. The process is not easy but can be rewarding if we give it our best shot. Furthermore, we may finally find the peace we have been looking for all of our lives.

Changing landscapes, on the other hand, may continue to increase our sense of isolation from our authentic self and mire us further into the dysfunction of our adaptive self spiraling us deeper into despair.

Joan Anderson, author of *One Year by the Sea*, as well as her recent bestseller *An Unfinished Marriage* has struck a chord with many readers through her decisions to take time to evaluate and share her fears as well as her triumphs regarding her long-standing marriage. Her frank assessment of herself at midlife, and her willingness to write about her experience not only provides shocks of *recognition* regarding marital dynamics but also fresh *hope* for all of us as we negotiate our own marital passages.

Many of us are seasoned by years of marriage in a way that is unhealthy and unfulfilling. If we want to, we can be newly awakened to the possibilities of an enjoyable and meaningful future together. And while no one can prescribe an easy solution or develop a specific step-by-step procedure for someone else's journey, reading a recommended book can be the first step towards that goal.

Furthermore, learning the tools from the recently mentioned relationship toolbox could be the second step. Add a few meaningful therapy sessions as step number three and we will be well on our way towards healthier ways of being. Still, it takes courage on the part of both spouses. At the same time it may be a good way to begin the new year. Courage is, after all, about conquered fear that saw the need to make space for prayers.

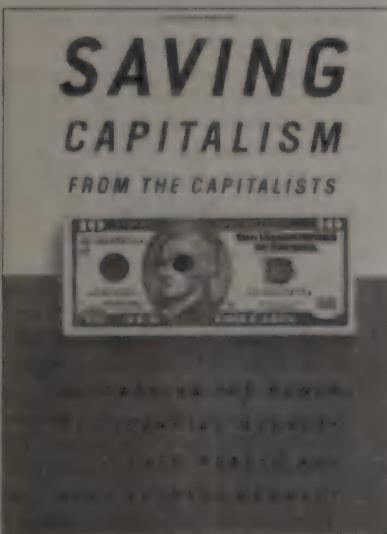
Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counseling Association in Surrey, B.C.



For the first half of life most of us develop adaptive ways of being that have

Global economics

Saving capitalism from the capitalists



NEW YORK (Zenit.org) — One of the institutions most criticized for its role in globalization, the International Monetary Fund, looks as if it has taken notice of the protests.

In July, Indian-born Raghuram Rajan was appointed as economic counselor and director of the IMF's research department. Previously, Rajan was a professor of finance at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

Earlier this year Rajan published, with colleague Luigi Zingales, a book entitled *Saving Capitalism From the Capitalists*. The book very much favors the free market system but recognizes that the growing protests against some of its failings are well founded.

Markets also create losers

At an Oct. 24 conference on the legacy of Milton Friedman, Rajan told the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas that the backlash against the free market caused by the continuing anti-globalization movement has been augmented by a combination of the current economic downturn and recent corporate scandals.

"Many of the people protesting in the streets against globalization are protesting against capitalism, which they accuse of oppressing workers, exploiting the poor, and making only the rich richer," he warned. One of the consequences of a growing opposition to free markets was the recent failure of the Cancun meeting of the World Trade Organization.

In their book, Rajan and Zingales affirmed that the open borders of a globalized world have improved the well-being of many people. Yet, markets also create losers, they added. And "the costs of competition and technological change fall disproportionately on some."

They argue that it is a mistake to ignore the concerns of the losers. But they also contend that it would be wrong to forsake the benefits of the free market by only tak-

ing into consideration the costs and not to see the future benefits for many of an open economic system.

Neither the left nor the right

The central thesis of the book is that neither the left nor the right has the answer to coping with tensions caused by free markets. The left tends to argue exclusively for greater government intervention, and the right favors free enterprise over what it sees as the inefficiency and corruption of the public sector. Both arguments have elements of truth, state Rajan and Zingales. Yet, "the political stability of markets cannot rest on one-sided ideological prescriptions," they say. Instead, they favor a "sophisticated system of checks and balances."

Flaws of the free market

The book focuses primarily on financial markets, a sector long reviled for its alleged immorality. Financiers, they acknowledge, are often held to be leeches or overly powerful, and many works of literature "have financiers occupying a moral space considerably below that of prostitutes."

Some inherent factors in the financial sector make it insecure: uncertainty over how much an investment will return; bad luck; and dishonesty on the part of some. In underdeveloped countries the situation is complicated by a lack of competition, which means there are fewer lenders to choose from, and a lack of property rights that often works against the poor who cannot establish a clear title to their house or land that would in other circumstances serve as collateral for loans.

When structures are underdeveloped, finance tends to benefit the rich, the book observes. The financier will naturally tend to concede loans to people or firms who already have connections and assets, making it difficult for others to get a first step on the ladder of prosperity.

But while preferential treatment to those who already are well off is economically rational, note Rajan and Zingales, it is also something to be concerned about. "As a result, the poor are doubly damned, not only because they lose an option but also because their bargaining power when they work for those who have resources is weakened."

As well, when a few control resources they tend to restrict access to economic information and collude to make profits at the expense of the general economy. In fact, the authors observe, that many of the evils of capitalism — oppression of workers, cartels, unequal distribution of income — come about when the financial system is underdeveloped and the wealthy are able to successfully bar entry to newcomers.

What is to be done?

The 20th century showed that the solution to these defects does not lie in extend-

ing government ownership in the economy. "The socialist economy eventually fails to increase the size of the societal pie or even to redistribute the shrunken remains equitably," argue Rajan and Zingales.

A better answer is to disperse economic power. One of the ways to do this is by expanding access to finance. Risk management, stock markets, derivatives and other instruments are all helpful in reducing risks to investors, thus enabling greater financial flows that benefit an economy. Developed and competitive financial markets also normally oblige companies to divulge more financial information to the public, thus benefiting outsiders who wish to invest.

An important part of improving markets, they continue, lies in ensuring that managers will work to benefit public shareholders, and not loot the companies for their own benefit. For this to happen governments need to ensure there is a comprehensive body of laws, courts need to be fair and efficient and tax enforcement, which requires disclosure of profits, needs to be effective.

The book also defends the importance of permitting corporate takeovers. Some portray takeovers as part of a culture of greed where financiers act as vultures, picking over companies for their assets. Instead of vultures, the authors prefer to think of takeover merchants as having a role "similar to that of undertakers." Weeding out underperformers who are wasting shareholder funds enables a process of elimination that in the end will ensure a more productive economy.

Creative destruction

Enabling takeovers does not mean that Rajan and Zingales are in favor of huge, vertically integrated companies. Instead they point out the advantage of competition and promoting smaller, more flexible enterprises. In a telling example, they explain that in the late 1980s General Motors employed 750,000 workers to make \$ million cars,

while Toyota employed only 65,000 to make 4.5 million. Toyota could manage this by relying on independent suppliers.

General Motors had to change its methods, and in 2001 it had only 362,000 employees producing 8.5 million cars. The upside of this is that the increased pace of technological change, the growth in new firms based on innovation, and the rise in cross-border competition has made the modern economy more dynamic and efficient. The downside is that the concept of a lifetime job is over.

Overall, Rajan and Zingales judge the new entrepreneurial style to be beneficial for workers, as leaner and less hierarchical firms value more highly their human resources. Moreover, skilled workers in the modern economy command better remuneration. A critical observer could add, however, that they pay insufficient attention to the fate of unskilled workers or to the difficulties of employees (especially older ones) who face frequent job changes.

Regarding open financial markets, the book does note some drawbacks. Increased financial volatility leads to more frequent and more disastrous collapses. Free financial markets have the power to do both great good and great evil. Moreover, developing countries with weak institutions face substantial risks in opening up their economies.

The book finishes with a number of recommendations ranging from keeping economic power from getting overly concentrated and ensuring it is used efficiently, to improving corporate governance. They also recommend assistance for workers who lose their jobs through restructuring and improving education and health care in developing countries.

A large gap still exists between the views expressed in this book and the position of many critics of a globalized economic system. But a positive sign is that the IMF is giving an important role to someone who favors the free market even as he recognizes its limitations.



DECEMBER 1, 2003

People

Johnnie the Cobbler

My wife Cobi sent me on an errand the other day to take a pair of shoes to be stretched for some additional comfort. But her real motive was to have me meet Johnnie the cobbler just up from the Eastern Ave, CRC in the heart of what once was the Dutch ghetto.

She had heard about him from son Ron who seems to know everyone in the area. They both had found him to be a most delightful man. When she told me about him, I immediately thought that here was a story for CC as well as an opportunity for personal edification.

Finding the shop with an "Open" sign in the window I parked in the empty lot to the south of the building and made for the front door. But I discovered the hours to be 10:00 to 5:00. It was 9:40, so I went back to my car, turned on the radio and settled in for a short snooze.

Just as I was about to nod off I heard a tapping on my window. It was none other than Johnnie himself, who was about to put the key in the lock and invite the world into his domain. I was his first customer.

The shop was old but extremely orderly with numerous pairs of shoes all neatly lined up and everything as clean as a whistle.

I told him I was there on orders from my wife who had said I had to meet Johnnie. And in the interest of full disclosure I told him my son Ron had also put in a good word for him.

That brought forth a rousing exclamation of delight, and he had nothing but good to say about "the Doctor." Johnnie apparently knew all about his work in the clinic in the nearby Baxter Community Center.

By this time his fatherly face was beaming with delight, and we were on the way to becoming friends. And I was not slow in asking him a pile of questions.

Johnnie Myles told me he grew up in "the South," and right after high school in 1946 he joined the US Army Medical Corps at age 17. After one stint in the service he enrolled in the veterans training program being offered by the federal government after the Second World War.

He chose to become a shoe maker.

Having finished the course he went back into the Medical Corps for several more years. By this time he had a wife and children.

In 1959 he moved to Grand Rapids, where he got a job in a factory. Though it was not his first choice in how to make a living, he found it necessary in order to have "benefits" for his family. But he immediately set himself up moonlighting in a shoe repair business. His wife would take in the shoes during the day and he would do the work at night. This went on for several years.

In 1971 he bought a former party-store building on Eastern Ave. and converted it into Johnnie's Shoe Repair. He's been there ever since.



Though he is now 75 years old, he still works every day. He could, undoubtedly, retire and get along on his social security income but he still carries on. There is nothing he would rather do.

And he does it because he loves his work and is proud of it. "I do a good job. I would never put a pair of shoes out that door that I wouldn't wear myself."

As you talk to Johnnie you immediately sense that he also loves meeting and serving his customers and relating to the community. He put it simply: "There's no sense giving up what you like to do."

And it is not just the case of a man who likes to fix shoes so much he can't quit. There's an entirely higher motive working in Johnnie's soul. Without being quizzed or prompted he declared, "It's my calling. The Lord put me here to do this and I'll do it till he calls me up there."

And that sense of calling is clearly the motivation for a ministry through his work. I couldn't help coming to an immediate conclusion - here is a good Calvinist!

If I were to tell Johnnie I considered him to be a good Calvinist, he might not have the foggiest idea of what I was talking about, though he has heard lots about "Calvin" (College) in his day. He doesn't move in the right circles for that on Sunday. He is a long-time member of New Hope Baptist. While New Hope may be promoting good Calvinism they don't refer to it as such.

Reflecting on Johnnie, I can't help wondering how many of us do as well, we who still do a bit of talking about Calvinism.

But the obvious question that comes to mind as you talk with this 75-year-old craftsman is what is going to become of his shop when the Lord calls him home. Does he have some one being trained to step into his "shoes?"

That, at least, is Johnnie's view on the matter. That, obviously, is an oversimplification of the problem. No young person with an opportunity for higher education wants to become a cobbler. It doesn't offer great benefits or status.

But for those youth who have no aspirations for education, even to finish high school, becoming a cobbler could be a fine calling, as it has been for Johnnie.

But obviously, Johnnie and I belong to a passing age. We believe that "things" in the old days were better than they are today; that it is too bad we can't turn the clock back in certain areas of our existence and wipe out the impact of the rebellious sixties that tore things apart and had really no solution for putting things back together again. If you would ask us what should be done to make things better, Johnnie and I could tell you.

But it is no use. We've had our shot at it. It's time to let our kids and grandkids and God worry about it.

But we can tell you one thing - Johnnie and I really do know what we are talking about!

Ty Hofman is a Yankee-Canuck and retired minister of the Christian Reformed Church, living in Grand Rapids, Mich.



The answer is, No! And it is not a matter of his not having tried and not being concerned. But try as he did, he has no one interested in following his trade.

That disappoints him. He is disappointed in the younger generation that won't make an investment of time and effort to acquire the skills of a trade. There is no commitment to a long-term goal. They are interested only in a paycheck. They want the money, now.

British Columbians to decide on fair voting procedures

Richmond, BC - Fair Voting BC, the premier citizens group to lobby for voting system change, will suspend its advocacy activities until the Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform in BC makes its final recommendations in December 2004.

"We have largely achieved our objective, we have confidence in the process and the people who give leadership to the Citizens Assembly, and we urge British Columbians to participate in a rare opportunity to make our voting system more democratic and fair," said Fair Voting BC's President John Vegt.

Since its inception, Fair Voting BC has called for a referendum on electoral reform and lobbied political parties to make such a commitment. It successfully presented electoral reform as a non-partisan issue, but also convincingly argued that for political parties and politicians to decide the rules under which they hold and retain power places them in a huge conflict of interest.

"The BC Liberals did something unique," said Director David Marley, "they took the process away from politicians and gave it to the citizens, and we urge all political parties to respect that this process belongs to

the people."

Fair Voting BC does not advocate any particular voting system. It holds that British Columbians should first build consensus on what they expect from their voting system, then design one to meet those expectations.

Fair Voting BC suggests the following goals for our voting system would likely be supported by most British Columbians.

- Broad Proportionality - A party's power should reflect more closely a party's popular support.

- More Choice - Voting should not be constrained by vote splitting and fears of wasting one's vote.

- Stable Government - More consensus building amongst political parties.

- Institutional Reform - Less dictatorial approach to governing.

- Significant Local Representation - The personal service MLAs give to constituents should not be diminished.

While the society will cease its activities for the next year, it is expected that Directors as individuals will contribute to and participate in the Citizens Assembly process.

Opinion

Mainly on Money

I don't know of any hit tunes today, but some 30 years ago – or was it 40? – there were songs that had both catchy melodies and intriguing words, even though the prose did not always live up to the truth. I imagine this still is the case today. Perhaps a few of you might remember "Money is the root of all evil, money is the root of all evil, take it away, take it away."

Well, of course money isn't the root of the world's troubles, but the lust for it is: greed in other words.

If there ever was a greedy bunch, they are the men in charge of big business. It used to be that managers of the Fortune 500 would make, say 50 times, as much as the factory-floor personnel: now it often is 200-300 times, and bonuses to boot, even if the companies lose money. A good number of them are also given big blocks of shares at favorable prices. There the theory is that having a stake is the best incentive to do the utmost in increasing the firm's market value.

True, nobody knows the real worth of a corporation as well as the insiders: they make the earnings projections, they see the order book, have a reliable grasp of the future, so when it looks rosy, they hang on to their investment in the sure knowledge that it can only go up. That's why stock brokers, with bulging eyes, watch what these fellows-in-the-know are doing. When these real experts sell more than they buy, a caution light begins to flash. Of course. It signals a lack of trust in their own future. When this proportion reaches 20 to 1, a bear market is coming, a sure sign that the market will go down-down-down.

Today that ratio stands at 59: almost three times the classic definition. So, if you have money riding on the stock market, be warned. If the greedy bosses are selling, we all need to.

Bull from Bush

Forget about bullish talk from Bush. When third quarter growth came in at 7.2 percent, he boasted: "See my tax cuts are working. We haven't seen such an increase in the economy in 20 years." What he forgot to say was that thanks to one shot deals such as \$14 billion in tax credits and other billions of large federal tax rebates, as well as give-aways by GM, Ford and Chrysler – these below-cost auto sales alone counted for 1.2 percent of the total growth – the spurt in Gross Domestic Product would have been a mere 3 percent, barely keeping pace with inflation. That's why the stock market did not respond to this figure.

One thing the Bush Administration is good at is fancy titles for its initiatives. Its "Clean Air" plan gives power companies a free ride. Its "Healthy Forests" make sure that logging companies benefit. In its "Jobs and Growth Plan" his Council of Economic Advisers promised in June 2003 enough

growth to create in each of the next 18 months 306,000 jobs or 5.5 million new positions by the end of 2004, more than double the 150,000 needed to accommodate new immigrants and young people entering the employment force. So the USA had 126,000 new jobs in October. Big deal. In Canada in that month 65,000 people found work, a country less than one-tenth the size of the USA's GDP.

The hard truth is that there are still major job losses for the USA as a whole. Since the recession began 30 months ago in March 2001, 3.2 million private sector positions have disappeared, the largest loss since the Great Depression, and unemployment has risen to close to nine million people. If we count the one million people in jail, and the millions in the armed forces, the current 6 percent unemployment rate would be much higher.

In the meantime the number of Americans living in poverty has jumped by three million in the past two years. In that same time the median household income has fallen, while the number of two-income families, particularly those with children under 18, has declined sharply. Also there are millions of men and women who are working significantly fewer hours than they'd like, while many more millions have become discouraged and left the labor market. If only words and clever titles would cure, Bush would triumph again. Jared Bernstein, a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, has taken a look at the hours being worked by families, rather than individuals. The declines he found were of a magnitude that historically has been similar to double-digit unemployment rates.

Meanwhile working (and jobless) Americans continue to face:

- Sharply increasing local taxes, including property taxes.
- Steep annual increases in health care costs.
- Soaring tuition costs at public and private universities.

The result is that families are living very close to the edge economically. This situation is made even more precarious by rising mortgage rates and the mountains of debt American families are carrying – mortgages, overloaded credit cards, college loans, etc.

Combine this with a stock market that still has a 24 Price/Earnings ratio, compared to a more normal of 16 P/E, and the stage is set for a major drop in the stock market in 2004. Perhaps as much as 35 percent. No wonder insiders are selling.

Soros vs the neoconservatives

Talking about money, an interesting home front is opening up: Bush versus Soros, money versus money, money to buy favors versus money to do justice.

It's a matter of deep pockets, where

Bush between bears and bulls and under humpty-dumpty

George Soros, one of the world's richest men, has the edge. Already he has given away nearly \$5 billion of his own fortune to promote democracy in the former Soviet bloc, Africa and Asia. Now he has a new project: defeating President Bush. "It is the central focus of my life," Soros said: "The 2004 presidential race is a matter of life and death."

Overnight, Soros, 74, has become the major political player because "America, under Bush, is a danger to the world."

Money versus money. Bush hopes to raise \$200 million to assure his succession and so put his mouth where the money is, catering to greed and plutocracy. Soros is willing to bet his last dollar that this doesn't happen and willing "to put his money where his mouth is," ready to sacrifice for democracy. Soros believes that a "supremacist ideology" guides this White House. He hears echoes in its rhetoric of his childhood in occupied Hungary. "When I hear Bush say, 'You're either with us or against us,' it reminds me of the Germans." It conjures up memories of Nazi slogans on the walls, *Der Feind hört mit* ("The enemy is listening"). My experiences under Nazi and Soviet rule have sensitized me."

"Neoconservatives," Soros said, "are exploiting the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center to promote a pre-existing agenda of pre-emptive war and world dominion. Bush feels that on September 11 he was anointed by God, leading the U.S. and the world toward a vicious circle of escalating violence."

Iraq: lose-lose

Bush is in a real pickle. Paul Bremer, his commissar in Iraq, was abruptly summoned to Head Office, because command in Washington is facing a fundamental crisis of confidence. Bremer went back to that chaotic country to 'beg' the Iraqi interim governing council to take over: whatever spin the White House gives to this sudden independence kick – not too long ago it condemned France who suggested this – begging the conquered to take responsibility for the country you just occupied, looks more and more an act of desperation.

The entire affair reminds me of that Mother Goose nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

The problem doesn't lie in Humpty-Dumpty (Iraq) in the first place. The problem can be directly traced to Washington. There President George W. Bush's team went into a war with one plan only. That plan caused a great fall. Now there is nothing in place to patch the place up again. In vain looking for a cheap solution, and internally divided – stay, leave, more troops, less troops – the Bush-men are witness. They

lack the will to accept the guerrilla war for what it is. Also because of Iraq, the USA is losing momentum elsewhere: on the defensive in Afghanistan and even failing to wage the broader war on al Qaeda.

If a large company hits the wall, you fire the CEO and those responsible. But in a political framework this is only possible at election time. The self-induced Iraqi problem needs a solution soon, or the accidental president will be booted out next November.

Withdrawal and admitting that this particular campaign was an error, isn't an option, because the results of a withdrawal after having invaded would be far worse than never having invaded at all. But staying put is just as risky: a classical lose-lose situation.

No doubt history will record that America yet again has produced a new chapter in a future "March of Folly" book, a war started for whatever reason: oil, showing off military might, teaching Islam a lesson, establishing a beach-head in the Middle East, deposing a dictator, helping Israel, finishing off what Papa Bush failed to do. Take your pick.

The result has been mayhem in the Middle East, which could well cause a world-wide financial crisis. I feel bad about it, not only because thousands of innocent lives are sacrificed and maimed for no valid reason, but, believe it or not, I feel sorry for Bush who, poor fellow, was duped by Cheney, Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld with their imperial ambitions, and by Andrew Card, White House Chief of Staff, who saw some political gain in all this. Nevertheless, "George Soros, with your billions, and your concern for real democracy: God bless."



Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ontario

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Church News/Advertising

Church leaders told to prepare for peace in Sudan after civil war

Frederick Nzwi

Nairobi (ENI) — The general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Rev. Mvume Dandala, has told Sudanese church leaders to prepare to "market peace" in Sudan, due to hopes that a two-decade long civil war may soon come to an end.

"Churches in Sudan will have a crucial responsibility in monitoring peace implementation," Dandala told a meeting on Monday in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, of representatives of the New Sudan Council of Churches, international ecumenical partners and Christian councils.

The government of Sudan and the main Sudanese rebel group — the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) — agreed at a meeting in Kenya last month to bring the country's civil war to an end by December. The civil war has pitted the largely animist and Christian south of the country against the mainly Islamic north.

But Dandala warned that tensions behind the war might continue to exist even if peace was achieved. And some church leaders are cautious about being over confident about the prospects for peace.

"The government has destroyed 46 Churches between 1998 and 2003 in my presbytery in the west-

ern Upper Nile region. They came with tanks and bulldozers and crushed them down," the Rev. Matthew Deng, a leader in the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, told ENI in Nairobi.

The Rev. Boffelli Pasquale of the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Obeid in Sudan said that some Christian leaders were suspicious that fundamentalist groups would

not give peace a chance.

"Their philosophy is that of 'Islamization,'" said Pasquale. "They will not just stop because of a political peace agreement."

Of Sudan's 38 million people, 70 per cent are Muslims, living mostly in the north while Christians who account for about 5 per cent of the population live mainly in the south.

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<p>Anniversary</p>	<p>1953 September 24 2003</p> <p>BERT AND MARIE VANDENBERG</p> <p>With thankfulness to God, we recently celebrated the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents.</p> <p>We pray that God may continue to be with them.</p> <p>Marilyn & Dick Kuiperij - Jon, Heidi, Annette, Woodville, ON Patricia, Smith Falls, ON</p> <p>Phil & Jannetta VandenBerg - Stephanie, Ian, Andrew, Richmond Hill, ON Bernice & Henry Steenbergen - Melinda, Dan, Josh, Benj, Abbotsford, BC Bruce & Sharon VandenBerg - Christopher, Jason, William, Ellen, Oakwood, ON</p> <p>Home address: RR 1 Oakwood ON K0M 2M0</p>	<p>Hoogeveen 1943 December 15 2003</p> <p>"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help...." Psalm 46:1</p> <p>With thanksgiving to God, we hope to celebrate the 60th Wedding Anniversary of</p> <p>JANETTE (nee Feddema) AND REMKES KOOSTRA</p> <p>Love and congratulations from your children:</p> <p>Dorothy & John Kraft, Ottawa, ON Jacky & Theo VandePutte, Brantford, ON Clarence Kooistra, Vernon, BC John & Gail Kooistra, Acme, AB grandchildren & great-grandchildren</p> <p>The Rev. Dr. Remkes Kooistra is also celebrating 60 Years of Service as a minister of the Gospel.</p> <p><i>Due to health concerns, no visits please.</i></p> <p>Address: Hope #404 7900 McLaughlin Rd Brampton ON L6Y 5A7</p>
<p>Birthday</p>	<p>Happy 85th Birthday Maaike Dykstra-DeHaan</p> <p>(wife of the late Lieuwe Thomas Dykstra '66) of Beamsville, Ontario</p> <p>We thank God for His faithfulness to you, and we thank you for your wonderful Christian example of faith, love and trust in all you do. Congratulations and love from your children:</p> <p>Chuck & Corrie Fran & Mike Bylsma Al Dykstra & Weya Wilson Marten & Mary Ann Teresa Shepherd Shirley & Brian Stouck Ray & Joanne Frank & Gail George & Donna Bob & Lorraine (Alb) Greta & Brian Spielmacher Wendy (Alb) Jane & Gerard Dawe (Alb) Veronica & Garry Warden Eddy Dykstra & Wendy Putnickovich 29 grandchildren with 13 spouses & 37 great-grandchildren</p> <p>An OPEN HOUSE will be held in her honor on Saturday, November 29, 2003 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Heritage Christian School, 4th Avenue @ 19th Street Jordan, Ontario Mailing Address: M. Dykstra, RR 1 Beamsville ON L0R 1B1</p>	<p>Garijp, Friesland Brampton, Ontario March 21, 1928 November 1, 2003</p> <p>"I have loved Thee with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3</p> <p>On November 1, 2003 the Lord took unto himself our dearly beloved wife, mother and oma</p> <p>MARTHA SALY (nee Kloosterman)</p> <p>in her seventy-sixth year.</p> <p>Beloved wife of Joop (John) Saly for 45 years. Lovingly remembered by her children: Anthony & Judith, London, Ontario Robert (Bob), Woodstock, Ontario Dear Oma of: Pierce, Lauren and Rachel. Sadly missed by her brothers and sisters in the Netherlands, sisters-in-law in Canada and extended family.</p> <p>The service was held on November 5, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. in the Second Christian Reformed Church in Brampton, Ontario Pastor Erick Schuringa, (Officiating) Pastor Nick Overduin and Pastor Peter DeBruyne.</p> <p>Mailing address: John C. Saly, 4 Pearson Road Brampton ON L6Y 2N1 e-mail address: jcsalmar@rook.ca</p>

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MUSICA SACRA CHORUS**GLORY TO GOD**

Director: Johann Van Ittersum
Pianist: Elise Vanderspek
Organist: James Vanden Brink

Emmanuel Reformed Church (Woodstock) - Sat. Nov. 29, 8:00pm DV
Calvary Christian Reformed Church (Flamborough) - Sat. Dec. 13, 8:00 pm DV
Norwich United Church (Norwich) - Sat. Dec. 20, 8:00 pm DV

Our choir sings a variety of repertoire; well-known Christmas carols to larger pieces. Our concerts also feature a String Ensemble formerly known as the Woodstock Strings (Woodstock and Norwich) and Trumpets (Flamborough).

For more information contact Johann Van Ittersum 519-863-6462

A free will offering for a local charity will be taken at the end of each concert.



**HERITAGE
CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

for Durham Region,
Zion CRC, 409 Adelaide Ave. E.
Oshawa

December 21, 3 p.m.

Rev. J. Veenstra will preach in Dutch

"Hoe zal ik U ontvangen?"
Rev. D. Habermehl, organist.

A social hour will follow the service.



Events/Advertising**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

- Nov 29** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m. Providence United Reformed Church, 447 Second St., Strathroy. Freewill offering. (519)637-4357
- Nov. 29** Musica Sacra Chorus presents "Glory to God" with director Johann Van Ittersum and Elise Vanderspek at Emmanuel Reformed Church, Woodstock, 8:00 p.m. More info, call: Johann Van Ittersum at 519-863-6462. See ad this issue.
- Nov 30** Dutch Service at the Ancaster CRC. 3 p.m. Rev H. VanderPlaat preaching
- Nov 30** Dutch Community Christmas Song Service, 7:30 p.m. at the Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. N. Woodstock, ON Rev. Roeland Hartmans officiating Babysitting provided Refreshments served after the service
- Dec 5, 6, 7** Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta, 50th anniversary - weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship. All former and present members and friends are invited. For info, call: Eleanor Wildeboer at 403-782-2602 or e-mail wilelwildeboer@aol.com (See ad this issue)
- Dec 6** Pro Musica Choir, Brent Fifield conductor, Bruce Kirkpatrick-Hill, Organ. A Christmas Proclamation. 8:00 PM. Wellington Square United Church, 2121 Caroline St. Burlington ON. For info call: 905 632 1347 or visit www.promusicachoir.org
- Dec 13** Musica Sacra Chorus presents "Glory to God" with director Johann Van Ittersum and accompanist Elise Vanderspek at Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Flamborough, 8 p.m. For info, call: Johann Van Ittersum at 519-863-6462. See ad this issue
- Dec 14** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m Knox Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas. Freewill offering for Christmas Care & Salvation Army. For info: (519) 637-4357
- Dec 20** Musica Sacra Chorus presents "Glory to God" at Norwich United Church, Norwich, 8 p.m. Director Johann Van Ittersum and accompanist Elise Vanderspek. Call Johann Van Ittersum at 519-863-6462 for information. See ad this issue.
- Dec 21** Heritage Christmas Service for Durham Region, Zion CRC, 409 Adelaide Ave. E., Oshawa, 3 p.m. Rev. J. Veenstra will preach in Dutch, "Hoe zal ik U ontvangen..?" Rev. D. Habermehl, organist. A social hour will follow the service.
- Jan 17** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church, 150 Bruinsma Ave., Wallaceburg. Freewill offering for the Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357
- April 10** Annual Festival of Praise by the Christian Male Chorus Association of South Western Ontario. 7:30 p.m. Centennial Hall, 550 Wellington St. London. Five choirs with over 200 men participating. Ticket: \$13 (519)451-5484 or email: jettickk@sympatico.ca For information: (519)637-4357.
- May 2** Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Cresendo Male Choir 7:30 p.m Knox Presbyterian Church 55 Hincks St., St. Thomas. Free will offering for Canadian Bible Society. (519)637-4357

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Dutch Community Christmas Song Service

Nov 30 7:30 p.m. at the Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. N.

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Rev. Roeland Hartmans officiating
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Refreshments served after the service

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- Psalm 90:1

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News

In the midst of a working week, a week of daily prayer retreats

Sonya Vanderveen

A hush fell over St. Paul Street United Church in St. Catharines, Ontario as Christians from different denominations – Catholic, Anglican, Reformed, United, and a community church – participated in the Week of Guided Prayer, October 26 – November 1. All other church activities were canceled to allow for an atmosphere of quiet and serenity. Twenty other United Churches in Ontario also hosted a similar event this year.

Sue Empringham, one of three women who coordinated the event, explained that the Week of Guided Prayer is “a retreat in the midst of busy life,” designed for people to participate in while keeping up with their daily routines.

“Its purpose,” she said, “is to provide a quiet space where a person can meet daily with a prayer companion, and try a way of devotional meditation called ‘praying the Scriptures’.” This involves living into the Bible passage in various ways, perhaps by imagining oneself as a biblical character in the story, by pondering the meaning of one or two words in the passage, or by experiencing the sights, sounds, or smells that the passage evokes.

Sunday afternoon participants gathered for fellowship and to learn about what the week entailed. Each participant, called a retreatant, was matched with a prayer companion, and committed to spending one-half hour a day at home praying the Scriptures and one-half hour a day at the church meeting with his or her prayer companion. Thirty-one retreatants, four of whom were men, eleven companions, and three coordinators, gathered at the end of the week to rejoice in what God had done for them and to celebrate communion.

Jesuit model

The vision that inspired the Week of Guided Prayer originated at the Center for Spirituality in Guelph, Ontario, a Jesuit community, when priests became concerned about the declining number of retreatants attending their center. Realizing that many people no longer took the time for week long or weekend retreats, the priests envisioned bringing the retreat experience to their parishioners. Eventually, their dream became reality, not only for their own parishioners, but also ecumeni-



Participants in the Week of Guided Prayer

PHOTO COURTESY OF S. EMPRINGHAM

cally. Empringham explained that in the 1980s the United Church took the Jesuit model, wrote its own material, and fashioned its own version for use in any church.

Empringham encouraged St. Paul Street United Church to host a Week of Guided Prayer after she learned about the event at a United Church Conference in 1995. When she returned home, she wrote to several area United Churches and organized a meeting of interested people. A committee was formed, the core of whom are still actively involved each year.

Beginning as a retreatant, and later serving as a companion,

Empringham has now coordinated the event for the past six years.

Her task, along with the other coordinators, was to oversee the entire week, organize opening and closing sessions, and match companions with retreatants.

Evidence of how God works

“It is always amazing how the matching works,” Empringham said enthusiastically. “The right retreatant always ends up with the right companion. God works in many wonderful ways over the week. There are numerous surprises and many breakthroughs

that people have over concerns in their lives. Many find help in the process of praying the Scriptures. The companions experience so much evidence of how God works in each person’s life.”

Companions are former retreatants who have been trained in two day-long workshops given by the Week of Guided Prayer Network of the United Church. Each meets with 3 or 4 retreatants throughout the week. According to Empringham, companions listen and reflect back to retreatants what they hear them saying about their relationship to God and their experience of reading Scripture. Companions do not impose dogma or interpretation on retreatants. Mainly, companions celebrate retreatants’ faith and find ways to help them grow deeper in their walk with God.

Prayer labyrinth

Besides talking with their companions, retreatants are encouraged to walk a labyrinth set up in the church’s gymnasium. Empringham explains that the eleven-circuit labyrinth, like the one in Chartres Cathedral in France, built between 1194-1220 A.D., is “a meditation and prayer tool.” Labyrinths were used by early Christian pilgrims as they

sought guidance from God. Unlike a maze, which contains puzzles and is meant to get people lost, a labyrinth consists of a single twisting path which one follows to a central point and then back out again.

Through her retreat experiences, Empringham has learned to listen more carefully for God’s voice in her life. “I have learned to wait and trust that God will direct me,” she said, “just as God has directed others through the Scriptures every day.” This year she appreciated the opportunity to meet other Christians on their spiritual journeys and rejoiced in how the event eliminated “all denominational walls, so that everyone was comfortable and we forgot who belonged to what church.”

First time retreatants expressed delight in their discovery of a new way to look at and experience Scripture, in the gift of having a companion to share insights with, and in a new-found discipline to daily reflect on Scripture. Returning retreatants said they were surprised at how much they learned each year. One retreatant called the process a yearly booster shot she needs to keep her on track.

Redeemer receives large gift for expansion

Redeemer University College announced that it had received a gift of \$270,000 in the early stages of its capital campaign to raise money for expansion. The gift came from local residents Doug and June Barber, members of St. Cuthbert Presbyterian Church in Hamilton. Doug Barber is the founder and retired CEO of Gennum Corporation and past chair of McMaster University’s Board of Governors. June Barber is a local artisan.

Redeemer’s capital campaign is to build a new wing with additional classrooms and library space to accommodate the growth in enrolment. The Barber gift provides for the permanent installation of an exhibit by artist James Tugan and a pilot program to develop student leadership.

Redeemer’s President Justin Cooper called the gift “a tremendous endorsement of Redeemer’s vision for Christian liberal arts and sciences education that develops a broad knowledge base and critical thinking skills,

part of the educational fabric in Canada.

“We are thrilled with this gift,” he said, “not only as an example of generous philanthropy but because the Barbers show their understanding for what we do here. Their support of our mission as a Christian undergraduate university is gratifying and also demonstrates that Redeemer is increasingly viewed as a community resource.”

Doug and June Barber speak highly of Redeemer and its students. “We have high regard for the university experience Redeemer offers – a Christian liberal arts and sciences education that develops a broad knowledge base and critical thinking skills,

together with specialization in a specific field or discipline. Redeemer’s growing reputation for preparing highly qualified

graduates is well deserved. We are fortunate to have this vibrant, growing institution as part of our community.”



Doug and June Barber with Redeemer President, Justin Cooper

PHOTO COURTESY OF REDEEMER